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FIRST VOLUME.

ANGELA PISANI.

FIRST VOLUME.

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ANGELA PISANI:

A NOVEL.

BY THE LATE

HON. GEORGE SYDNEY-SMYTHE,

SEVENTH VISCOUNT STRANGFORD.

WITH A BRIEF MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR.

'You will have children who must either be base or unhappy; choose them unhappy.'—LEOPARDI *to his Sister on her Marriage.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY AND SON,

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1875.

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GEORGE SYDNEY-SMYTHE.

A SKETCH.

THE manuscript of this book was found a few years after the death of the Author; but as it appeared, after only a hasty examination, to be but a fragment, it was laid aside with a number of other scattered writings by the same hand. In the spring of last year, however, the return to power of the Conservative party, under Mr. Disraeli, recalled to the minds of many the episode of the 'Young England Triumvirate;' and, naturally, several allusions, both public and private, were made to the most characteristic figure in that group—George Smythe. Those who had known and loved him spoke together of the early promise he had given, of the unfulfilled hopes and the incompleted work, of the things he had done and the things he had left undone

in the life so prematurely closed. Some of those who remembered him best asked after the novel he was known to have been engaged in writing; and one among his intimate friends, Mr. Disraeli, warmly expressed a hope that enough had been completed to make it fit for publication.

Whether this is the case or not the public must decide for themselves. A more careful study was made of the manuscript—which had been left in the greatest confusion, and some of it nearly illegible—and it then appeared that it had reached a far more advanced stage than had been thought at first. The plot of the story, indeed, although it was doubtless quite finished in the mind of the Author, has not been completely worked out; for the story has not been composed in regular sequence, but, as artists work in mosaic, bit by bit, in detached pieces; here a group of flowers or figures, elaborate and highly finished; there the rough ground intervening; and then a delicate border or device, polished and glowing with colour, in strange contrast to the blank gap between. Nevertheless, it seemed to some who read the manuscript that there was more than enough of beauty in the work to out-

balance the want of cohesion and the interrupted flow of the narrative; and therefore, such as it was left by the Author, with all its faults and all its genius, it is now presented to the public. The editorial task has been limited to verbal corrections of the text, and to the introduction of two or three very brief passages which appeared absolutely necessary in order to bridge over the wider gaps in the narrative. Let us hope that the weapons of adverse criticism may be blunted by the consideration that most of the faults to be detected in it—and there are many that are patent and glaring—would have been corrected by the Author had he lived to complete his task.

We have got to live so fast, and the stage of our world is so thickly crowded with the actors in the day's drama, that those among us who fall by the way are too soon forgotten; the lapse of a few years fills up the blank to most of us, and there is not time to tell those who press on from behind of what they did and were who have gone before. Not thirty years have elapsed since the breaking up of the 'Young England' party, yet how few are left to whom the names and prin-

ciples of that party are familiar, or by whom one of the most original and picturesque incidents in the socially political history of this century is remembered! It may be as well, therefore, to say something briefly of the career of the Author.

George Sydney-Smythe was born at Stockholm in April 1818, while his father resided there as Minister Plenipotentiary. From Eton, where he attracted some attention by his English verse, he went to St. John's College, Cambridge, where he was the companion of the present Lord Lyttelton, Lord Penzance, Lord John Manners, Mr. Beresford Hope, the late Frank Courtenay, etc. He spoke at the 'Union' with great success.

His political *début* was made in January 1841, when at the age of twenty-three he was returned for the borough he represented for eleven years —Canterbury; he took his seat in the last session of the Queen's first Parliament. Lord Melbourne was then Premier. As his election took place shortly before the meeting of Parliament, when people were weary of the recess, and there was no topic specially occupying public attention, he had the good fortune to attract all eyes to this provincial arena. Just then the Queen, by her

supposed preference for the Ministerial or Liberal party, was being assailed with the utmost spite and bitterness; all sorts of blame and slander were, for the moment, levelled at her. George Smythe, with precocious insight, steered clear of this indefensible mistake, although the Opposition he came in to support were declaiming with passionate excitement against her. With perfect assurance he made a most brilliant *éloge* upon her Majesty, describing her with great force as combining all the graces and virtues of all the sovereigns in history. The Whigs complained that he had taken the wind out of their sails, and the Tories well understood the lesson which this mere boy had given them.

This was a good beginning. During this session he had but to show himself to be applauded. He commenced debating as a favourite member in a triumphant Opposition: this was in itself a piece of good fortune—an advantage, however, which he was not completely capable of utilising. He was never a very ready speaker; he had to be wound up under the pressure of a high nervous excitement which not only wore him out, but made him far less useful than he

would otherwise have been. His speeches were graceful, striking, rich in imagination and flow; but he required time to elaborate them, and an effort to overcome his natural or constitutional indolence to deliver them.

Sir Robert Peel succeeded Lord Melbourne in the month of September. Had George Smythe then come forward and spoken on the discussion which ushered in the change of Government, had he then but amplified his provincial speeches, giving them more solidity and detail, he would have secured himself some employment in the Conservative administration;[1] and it is scarcely too much to say that all the mistakes and misfortunes of his after-life would probably have been avoided. His talent was admitted on all sides; he was young, bright, and winning; nothing was wanting but that solidity and weight which an official position affords to stir up the power and

[1] It is an interesting fact that Sir Robert consulted Mr. Gladstone as to what member should be chosen to second the Address to the Crown on the opening of Parliament. Mr. Gladstone replied, 'There are two young speakers beyond all others to choose—Jem Bruce and George Smythe.' Mr. Bruce (afterwards Earl of Elgin) was chosen; but the anecdote shows how much impression, as a speaker, George Smythe had made.

ability, which incontestably existed, into action. His whole being would have shaped into maturity had he then, at the beginning of his public career, been moulded by the exigencies of Downing Street and bound by the coils of 'red tape.' Sir Robert Peel detested 'red tape' and delighted in genius: he might have made George Smythe the most useful and ornamental of his supporters by judicious training at this moment, but he failed to discern the value of or to encourage the abilities of his follower, and the opportunity was lost.

Notwithstanding this just regret, it is true that George Smythe's mind was little suited naturally to the character of a statesman. He could not curb his erratic and restless disposition to the trammels and discipline of a party, or sacrifice his poetical theories and the dreams of a vivid imagination at the bidding of official leaders. He had none of the patient habits indispensable for close and solid study, just as he was too impulsive for the sober, steady, untiring round of daily work in public life; he allowed himself too often to be led, not by the quiet light of calmer and colder minds, but by the flashes of his own genius—for genius he undoubtedly had: and these aberrations,

however brilliant in themselves, would certainly have prevented his attaining a really high or foremost place in statesmanship. Indeed, throughout his Parliamentary career, neither friend nor foe could calculate with certainty upon the view he might take or the vote he would give, for his sensitive and highly strung nature was apt to be swayed by influences incomprehensible to more sober minds. Sometimes his over-eagerness made him mistake a want of clearness of perception for subtlety, sometimes he mistook impulse for inspiration, and perhaps more than once he laid himself open to the charge of fickleness, if not of political disloyalty; but really untruthful he never was, for he thoroughly believed at the moment all that his warmth and energy of spirit combined to make him feel, and no one was as much disappointed as himself when he awoke to find the dream dispelled, and was forced to vanquish the excesses of his own imagination by reasoning and facts.

So it went on from 1841 to 1845; George Smythe keeping the attitude of a partisan just as much as was necessary, yet often swerving aside from Sir Robert Peel: laughing openly at his

mistakes in details: sometimes attacking him in the House: making himself felt by the boldness of his illustrations and the pointed liveliness of his style, but yet gaining nothing in administrative experience or Parliamentary *aplomb*.

At this time he allied himself closely with Mr. Disraeli, and in 1844 was immortalised by him in the character of Harry 'Coningsby.' It is possible that 'Coningsby' was never intended as a portrait of George Smythe, but that it was currently reported to be so was perhaps one of his worst misfortunes, for the idealised and glorified picture supposed to be there painted by his friend and master was very unwholesome to a mind that required bracing rather than humouring and panegyrising.

These were the days of the 'Young England Party,' a little party formed by identity of sentiment in the very heart of the Conservative ranks. The leader, Mr. Disraeli, no doubt discerned the usefulness of the youngest of the three, for he describes him [1] (nearly thirty years later) as not only 'remarkable for his influence over youth,' but also as having a great power of 'promulgating

[1] See Preface to 'Lothair.' 1870.

a new faith with graceful enthusiasm.' The triumvirate, however, had not enough political principle in common to keep them long together; George Smythe was too Liberal to agree with them in most things; they were for Protection, and he for Corn Law Repeal. It was because Sir Robert Peel appeared to him to promise to pursue a policy of enlightened Conservatism that he fascinated his follower at the first. It was because his mind yearned for a revival of liberal sentiments and policy, such as illumined the early speeches of Pitt,—because he revolted from the commercialism of Peel and was won over by the mediæval halo cast over politics as well as religion, that he joined the 'Young England' party.

In fact the aspirations and sweetnesses of this school were entirely in harmony with the romantic turn of his mind. Romance tinged equally his politics and his religion. He loved to recall the grandeur of the ancient nobility of England and of France, to sing the days of chivalry, of Catholic kings and cavaliers, of the picturesque splendour of ecclesiastical ceremonial; writing many polished and beautiful verses upon

these subjects while yet he turned almost as warmly to throw the halo of poetry over 'the merchants of Old England;' and together with his friend Lord John Manners, he dreamed of a powerful aristocracy and an almsgiving Church protecting and cultivating the affections of a dependent peasantry. The interests that bound these two together have been swept away by time; but death has not severed the tie of love and friendship between them.

Besides these tender dreams and friendships, another triumvirate arose, wrapped in poetic clouds of that religious fervour which ever and anon took possession of George Smythe's mind when in company with two beloved college friends—Frederick (afterwards Father) Faber, and Thomas Whytehead, who ended his brief life as a missionary in New Zealand. For many years these three were constantly interchanging poems, of which only a very few have been published.

In this same year of 1844 he published a volume called 'Historic Fancies;' a *mélange* of politics and romance, philosophy and rhapsody; some of it weak and trifling, all of it graceful

and polished. It contained a number of admirably written historical sketches of the chief actors in the French Revolution: these sketches are brief, but they show most careful study of the nice shades of distinction between the men, with great power of observation and critical skill; they are full of noble thoughts, striking pictures, and perfect language. A good judge has remarked, 'It is unfortunate that many of George Smythe's best writings never passed beyond the circle of his intimate friends; but in his "Historic Fancies" he displays a degree of refined scholarship and thoughtfulness, of wit and irony, of playfulness and poetical sentiment, rarely combined within the compass of one small volume.' This book is dedicated to Lord John Manners, with an affectionate allusion to the Sydney blood that flowed in both their veins.

We may here also mention two articles written by George Smythe in the 'Oxford and Cambridge Review,' in 1845; one on Earl Grey, the other on George Canning; both of them written with great ability and much charm of language.

The most prominent feature that recurs to those who recall George Smythe to memory is

probably his speaking.[1] He was fluent, graceful, and persuasive; he had the gift of a clear, sweet voice and a good manner. It is said that his oratory was brilliant rather than effective, and that he shone more out of the House of Commons than within it. One of his best speeches is well remembered to this day by all who heard it, and perhaps few speeches have ever produced at the moment a greater or more heart-stirring effect. It was delivered at Manchester on the evening of October 3, 1844, in the Athenæum, or, as it was then called, the Free Trade Hall, when, to use the words of Lord Houghton (in the same place, January 22, 1875), 'George Smythe astonished his Conservative friends by his avowal of the principles of Free Trade, and Mr. Disraeli uttered those sentences of weight and eloquence which inaugurated his great career.' Every part of the vast hall was crammed with listeners, and the platform was crowded with celebrities, very many

[1] One of his speeches, made at an election dinner at Canterbury, was warmly praised by the first Lord Abinger —himself the most severe of critics, uniting in his memory the speeches of Erskine, Sheridan, Pitt, Fox, and Canning.

of whom have already passed away. He said: -

'Men of Manchester, you have arisen to do honour to letters in a land where too little honour has been done to letters. With a spirit worthy of a younger and freer age, you have resolved to offer to the author and the man of letters a reward of a simpler and less sordid character than the mere hire of this newspaper, or the pay of that review; or, with intentions yet more far-sighted and profound, you may have resolved to correct some of these, the anomalies of a country which is governed by its journals, but where the names of its journalists are never mentioned; of a country where, by the most unhappy of inversions, it is the invention which makes the fortune and the inventor who starves; of a country where, if the men of science aspire to the highest honours which you have to bestow—the suffrages of their fellow-citizens—those men of science will poll by units where mere politicians will poll by hundreds. It seems to me, men of Manchester, especially meet and right and fitting that you should redress these evils, because there is an old, an intimate, and a natural alliance between literature and commerce. You know what is passing among foreigners: you regard with sympathy the honours which abroad are paid to literature. The very Ambassadors now sent to us from foreign courts are so many reproaches for our neglect of letters. Who is the Ambassador from Russia?—a man who has risen by his pen. Who is the Ambas-

sador from Sweden?—an author and an historian of British India. Who is the Ambassador from Prussia?—an author and a professor. Who is the Ambassador from Belgium?—again a man who has risen by literature. Who is the Ambassador from France?—an author and an historian. Who is the Ambassador from, I had almost said our fellow-countrymen, in America?—again, an author and professor. I will venture to predict for the literature that shall result from such a meeting as this—that shall be fostered and encouraged by such sympathies as yours—a destiny yet more lasting and auspicious, because it will not lean upon the reed of patronage, it will not be patronised by monarchs, it will not be fashioned by nobles, it will not be confined to classes: it shall be free, independent, universal and tolerant commerce. . . . It is impossible for anyone to have studied the history of the last half-century without perceiving that Manchester has always been foremost in the great work of national advancement. You represent a great necessity; I believe there is a great work to do, and I believe that you will do it. You have already carried your material triumphs to the remotest corners of the earth; you have also remembered there was still another world to conquer. Nor will your triumphs in this spiritual world be less remarkable because the same creative power which in the world of action is called invention, and which aids and serves and ministers to man—that same creative power in the world of thought is called Genius, and

governs and provides for man. But in either sphere, be it of thought or of action, your object is ever the same; it is your high and holy mission to benefit mankind. There is nothing small, there is nothing exclusive, there is nothing partial, nothing sectarian, in the spirit of British Commerce. It was out of a temper as catholic, as universal, that the humanities first sprang; it will be out of a temper as catholic that here in the metropolis of English enterprise great things will again be done. . . . Out of the impulse given [by the foundation of the Rhenish and the Hanseatic Leagues], out of the spirit thus awakened, out of free commerce there sprang free letters. . . . It was the destruction of monopolies in trade that proved the destruction of monopolies in knowledge; the emancipation of the one proved the emancipation of the other. Here, then, in a country as free . . . . with merchant princes animated with a munificence as large . . . . there shall be to Manchester a renown as great as that of Mayence. I speak not of your local munificence, but I see your argosies and vessels daily laden, not with bales of cottons and silks, but with goods which have no declared or official value: they are laden with truths borne from this free island which tend to elevate the character of man; they are laden with principles which tend to unite all men in one fair confraternity of reciprocal assistance. And when out of a spirit so catholic, a power so universal, the old world shall have again received one of those moral shocks which, like

printing or steam, throw it one stage forward on its career, when civilisation shall be one hour nearer its meridian, you will remember that this meeting too had some share in the work of progress; because here this very hour we are proclaiming the banns of a marriage which represents the primeval alliance between the spirit and matter; a marriage between the industry which has conquered the world and overspread it "as the waters cover the sea," and an intellect which is young, of the people, and which by God's help shall continue *free*.'

Another remarkable speech, that may be read even now with pleasure, was delivered in the House of Commons upon the Maynooth Grant in April 1845, when he launched forth in an epigrammatic and elaborate composition. It was full of raillery, at once fine and effective, remarkable indeed as coming from so young an orator. This speech, which was of the highest practical importance, renewed the old links between the speaker and Sir Robert Peel. The transition of December 1845 occasioned a scarcity of colleagues, and Sir Robert was too glad to offer the Under-Secretaryship for Foreign Affairs to George Smythe. Unfortunately he lost it in the follow-

ing June by the retirement of Sir R. Peel. As we have said before, he was not made of the stuff that can become a steady official servant, and in his short tenure of office he did not exert himself much. As the late Under-Secretary he might after this have taken a prominent position as the critic on every question of foreign policy in the new Government. Many opportunities occurred of which he might have availed himself with advantage had he so willed. It seemed evident that he was conscious of his inability to endure the hard work, the roughness, the noise of the British debating-house. No doubt physical weakness had much to do with his inactivity and apparent indifference, and perhaps more than helped him to become so sensitive to the opinions of others and so discontented with his own position that he allowed himself to sink into almost complete silence. He did, however, deliver, early in the session of 1847, a very fine speech upon the conduct of Austria and Russia in the annexation of Cracow, that was full of bold and forcible images, and brilliant passages.

We will quote but one more of his speeches; one delivered on July 6, 1847, at Canterbury,

when he presented himself for the third time before the electors, and met with his habitual success.

He began by regretting that a section of his constituents had withdrawn their confidence from him because of his votes in favour of religious toleration (referring to his votes in favour of the Maynooth Grant and the removal of Jewish disabilities, and against the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill), and said that perhaps these men would go so far as their forefathers, who, according to the records of the Canterbury corporation, had in 1535 paid 14*s.* 8*d.* for the expenses of bringing a heretic from London, with 2*d.* for wood to burn, 1*d.* for gunpowder, and 8*d.* for a stake and staple :—

'But there is this difference between the two cases: whereas the victim of former days suffered for a creed to which he heroically witnessed, the victim of these days suffers for a creed which he does not, cannot, will not entertain. Nay, I venture to believe that when the religious heats of the election shall have passed away, my opponents will doubt whether I am not the better Protestant in the inmost and truest sense of the word—I, who against such odds, assert the right of private judgment.'

With regard to the charge of having deserted the Tory party:—

'I desert the Tory party? Why, my sole regret is for the youth, the earnestness, the energy, and the passion with which as a mere boy I asserted before you the seeming paradox that the Tory party was the party of progress and of the people! But what is this Tory party? What are its principles, its traditions, its illustrations, its oracles? Is it a mere chorus of whiners, who in all times, all places, all seasons, have whined and whimpered, and canted and cried for a yesterday? Are the principles of the Tory party to be reduced to the negation of the "No Popery" cry? Are the traditions of the Tory party the traditions of Titus Oates, or even of Sacheverell? Is its illustration the flame of Lord George Gordon's mob? Are its oracles the echo speech upon Penenden Heath, or the hiccoughs of Pitt Clubs? Or is the Tory party a succession of heroic spirits, beautiful and swift, ever in the van and foremost of their age—Hobbes and Bolingbroke, Hume and Adam Smith, Wyndham and Cobham, Pitt and Grenville, Canning and Huskisson? Are the principles of the Tory party those popular rights which men like Wiffen and Hynde Cotton flung in the face of an alien monarch and his mushroom aristocracy? Are the traditions of the Tory party the noblest pedigree in the world, that long line of democratic measures which begin with the Habeas Corpus Act and end with Corn Law repeal?

Are the illustrations that glorious martyrology which opens with the name of Falkland and closes with the name of Canning? . . . . When I am accused of having departed from true Toryism, I claim asylum, I take sanctuary in the tomb of William Pitt—not the Pitt of mythology and of Pitt Clubs, but the Pitt of history, the Pitt of immortality. He defeated, if he could not conquer, a narrow, a selfish, a grasping, and a monopolising aristocracy; he raised the commercial class to those high places which in a commercial country are their heritage; he enacted those measures of free trade which he had inherited in theory from Adam Smith and in practice from Bolingbroke; he sympathised with those great spirits in 1789 in France, whose production still governs the world, and whose memory still fills it; he forecast a large measure of conciliation to Ireland; and when, defeated by bigotry in high places, he was prevented from enforcing it, he resigned. Such were the principles of that great master. I learned them in the story of his life, and by a diligent study of his speeches; and if I am wrong, I can only say that I would rather be wrong with Pitt than right with those who profane his memory and blaspheme his great name.'

On the subject of his opposition to Sir Robert Peel, he says:—

'I came in with others, full of hot thoughts and

ardent speculations, and we sat by men who, forsooth, are now patriots, but who then had but one rule, which adapted itself to all things, to all measures, to all debates, to all votes—the will of the sole minister. When persons were thus substituted for principles, personalities became a duty with those who wished to substitute principles for persons. "I am no more ashamed of having been a republican," said Mr. Southey, "than of having been a boy;" and I am no more ashamed of having used strong language against the Minister than I am of having been young. But now that I appear before you to render an account of my parliamentary conduct, I would fain take this opportunity of making an apology to a great man—a great man who has since shown that his heart was all the while with the people. But if I now regret this strong language—now here before you—I do not regret its occasion, for it was always used in defence of English liberties.'

Of Lord John Russell he says:—

'Notwithstanding the greatness of his position, and the still greater greatness within himself, I may perhaps be permitted to say—I who have that Sydney blood in my veins which was shed on the same scaffold with his Russell blood in defence of the liberties of England—that he remembers too much and too often that he is a Russell and a Whig, and too little and too late that he

is the Prime Minister of a country which is most heartily and thoroughly sick of the barren inanities of party.'

He hinted in this speech at his intention of becoming a journalist; an intention which he put into execution in the following year. To-day this seems a most natural and ordinary occupation; but in those days, not thirty years ago, it was quite extraordinary: in fact George Smythe was the first member of the aristocracy who became a steady contributor to the press; the first man of rank who became definitely and habitually connected with a daily newspaper. The friends of Sir Robert Peel had bought the 'Morning Chronicle' as their organ, and from this time for two or three years its columns bristled with the coruscations of George Smythe and Mr. A. Hayward. Mr. Disraeli regretted or appeared to regret deeply this misplaced industry, for unhappily from 1847 to 1852 his old friend and pupil committed a sort of Parliamentary suicide, and but rarely rose in his place to speak.

In 1852 the Whigs succumbed to a complication of adverse circumstances, and the Govern-

ment of Lord Derby had recourse to a dissolution at the end of the summer. After a great deal of unfortunate excitement, resulting in a duel,[1] about which vastly too much was said, George Smythe and his colleague both lost their elections, and his career in the House of Commons terminated. One more opportunity of retrieving the mistakes of his past life then occurred to him—Lord Aberdeen, in January 1853, offered him a place in his Government. The fatal, because now irreparable error, was again, and for the last time, committed: in accepting office he would have avoided the abyss of inaction, so inevitably destructive to a temperament such as his. Whether from an increase of the indolence which was natural to his hereditarily weak constitution, or from the dying out of the ambition which enriched and elevated his earlier years, he declined to take office, and his public and political life was henceforth at an end. It had begun full of promise,—it ended

[1] The duel was fought at Weybridge, and was rendered ridiculous by some absurd attendant circumstances. It is only remarkable as having been about the last duel fought in England.

bare of fruits. Perhaps the best summing up of his life is the expression used by one of the most worthy and now distinguished of his college friends: 'George Smythe was a *splendid failure.*'

There is but little more to be told. When a man's ambition is dead, he has ceased to believe in himself, and the rest is but the gloaming of evening, to be passed in the pleasures of society and friendship. These, indeed, were not wanting to George Smythe: few men have ever been more loved and delighted in than he. His quick sympathies and sensitive nature, his extensive though superficial knowledge, and his ready flow of conversation made him the pleasantest of companions: there are those of his friends yet left behind who speak of how he would keep them in talk till they utterly forgot how time had slipped away, and found the minutes they thought had elapsed had changed into hours. Mr. Disraeli, with the pen of a partial friend, writing of him several years after his death, still describes him as 'a man of brilliant gifts, of dazzling wit, infinite culture, and fascinating manners.' There was a bright, deferential sweetness of manner

about him which conveyed at once and equally the idea of his wish to please his companions, and of their power to please him. Yet with all this, and with a strong fibre of love and tenderness in his heart, there was an underlying current of bitterness within, which he either would not or perhaps could not control. He had more wit than humour, and a natural gift of satire that he inherited had been assiduously cultivated by his father. Too much so; for at any time, when the spirit seized him, he would turn his nearest and dearest friend round upon the spit of his ridicule, while yet, all the time, he was adoring that friend in his heart. He loved many, and was loved by more, for he was irresistibly winning and charming, and those who loved him were often blind to his shortcomings, forgave him his many faults, and mourn him yet as tenderly as when first he passed away from their companionship.

Born of a delicate family, his constitution too soon gave way under the wear and tear of a restless and irregular life. When he was called to the House of Lords in May 1855, he was already failing in health; and although it was at one time hoped that the progress of the disease

(consumption) which overtook him might be arrested by travelling and change of climate, it was found that no remedy could avail, and he died in England November 23, 1857.

E. STRANGFORD.

10 CHAPEL STREET, PARK LANE.

ANGELA PISANI.

PROLOGUE I.

1755.

There are but two events in History: the Siege of Troy and the French Revolution.—DISRAELI.

A NUN kneeling and weeping within an Oratory. Honester and bitterer tears were never shed, for they are over charms which have ceased to conquer and for a beauty which has lost its fascination. Our story, at any rate, opens with a truth. In the whole category of human vanity, what grief more sincere shall be found than that provoked by 'the sere and yellow leaf' of a woman's attrac-

tions? Yet, in all time, of all that painting and sculpture, poetry, love-song, romance, or history have handed down, it would not be easy to recall lineaments so severely faultless, eyes so languidly winning, hand and foot as perfect, small ways as graceful, and a grand manner as superb as those of Madame de Pompadour. Something of Aphrodite and something of Eve she suggests. A little still of the one with the apple in her hand, spiting two goddesses, and breaking Œnone's heart; but far more of the other with the taste of the apple still upon her lips, looking back wistfully to Paradise, and seeing the flaming sword which menaces her away.

Are her features wan and worn by ceaseless vigil? are her lips white by constant pressure of those pearl-like teeth to make them rose-red for a satiated Lord?

Yet the idolatry of art itself refines, the worship of the beautiful renders beautiful. Weep, poor Marquise! If you have one sin upon your soul which divines anathematize and moralists rebuke, many a man of letters is there in his garret, many an artist in his sordid studio, poor men of genius, to whose creations your taste has given life, in whose hearts your sympathy has inspired courage, to whose homes your charity has administered bread.

Weep, poor Marquise! though born in the middle class, and therefore still unforgiven of the highest, because you broke through their monopoly of giving mistresses to kings, you loved and cherished the lowest, when, true to nature, it sought to aspire. For therein lay a sympathy. Did not you, too, hold the scales of the European balance with those white hands on which

Maria Theresa so often, not without object, kissed cousinly caresses? Weep, poor Marquise! And do not you, O reader! either laugh or plume yourself in Pharisaical reproof, if living in a far more hypercritical age, you refuse to understand the motives of her genuine and natural distress.

Broken by melodious sobbing, her wail ran incoherently thus:—

'No, no, I can no longer deceive myself; 'tis not a question of costume. What can be so beautiful as the proud array of a secular of Remiremont, the noblest of orders? The plaited diadem, the dark ermine-doubled mantle, the white cincture, the azure robe adorn me unhappiest, and all in vain! Yet Louis is a judge! when first he surprised me as a Jacobine, with the fawn-streaked stole upraised to show an

ankle hymned in so many madrigals; and then in all the grand Dominican antithesis of white and black. I succeeded as a Feuillantine, too, in my dark grey dress, with the ebon edgings, and the silver cross in tissue in a bower at Versailles! Ah, how I hate the very name of Feuillants and of Jacobins now: may their curse lie heavy on his children's children as they do on my poor heavy heart!

'As a Miramione, too, but a year ago, with the long dark dress, the darker kerchief, and the snow-white lappets!—never since the first days, he said, had he thought me so perfectly divine; and then in the auburn gown, with the shadowy coiffure of the haughty order, how could I have failed as a Lady of Fontevrault?

'Alas, alas, my many failures! As a Nun of the Ten Virtues, in the gorgeous

colouring of scarlet vertugadin, in the white mantle, with the blue riband and the purple coif; in the bright blue cloud-like garb of an Anunciade, with the golden cross depending; as a Chartreuse—as a Minime—as a Clarisse—as a daughter of St. Cyr—ay, by the soul of the Maintenon!—as a daughter of St. Cyr.'

With anguish as deep as any of which spoilt woman is susceptible, with one swoop of her round white arms, with one inimitable movement of her high heel, Madame de Pompadour cast aside her Chanoinesse disguise. A king's affections she felt were flung away for ever in the heavy folds of that conventual attire. If she had failed to win Louis the Fifteenth in the sumptuous patrician garb of a Lady of Remiremont, she knew that for the future she had but one chance left, to govern without pleasing.

Pale and desolate and resolved and serene, she stood before her mirror, with her dishevelled powderless hair, her eye veiled by a haze of tears, as she herself thought in her artist-soul, a type of Titian's Magdalene, whose every hair seems painted in with penitential tears. A sight, if not for kings, at least for gods and men, or at any rate for boys and Cherubinos!

The Marquise has rung her bell, and Madame de Hausset, followed by two tiring women with combs and a *peignoir* wrapper have appeared. She has enveloped herself in a loose Cachemire robe of turquoise blue, she has slided her small feet into gorgeously embroidered azure slippers, which Dupleix had sent to her from Hindostan, she has wound an Indian scarf around her head, and she looks into her glass, metamorphosed into Guercino's Sibyl.

'Etiennette and Anais, you may retire! Send me my doctor.'

The attendants had scarcely time to withdraw before Madame de Pompadour's physician, the celebrated Quesnoy, entered.

'What is it?' he asked with characteristic rudeness, but with a real sympathy in his tone.

'Ah, Doctor,' said the Marquise, who had no secrets from him, 'another *fiasco*!' And the tears again raced fast and freely down, as she held out a white arm (which did not want it) for the slightest breath of *poudre à l'Impératrice* to be blown upon it, while she at the same time economised in motion by offering her pulse to her physician. And as he looked enquiringly, and not without solicitude, on her flushed brow and fevered colouring, like all women when man's love is ebbing from them, she turned back to the past.

'Do you remember that night, Doctor, when you and I and Hausset saved his life; when he was at the last gasp; when he fainted five times before we could bring him to himself, when his first words on waking were, "Ah, Toinette!" and his first wish that he might be well for my sake! Alas, alas! it is the exact opposite now!'

'*Poverina!*' said Quesnoy, with the familiarity of an elder brother.

'But what am I to do?' asked the Marquise.

'Philtres are gone out since Madame de Brinvilliers,' answered the Doctor; 'I can do nothing.'

"*À bas le métier*—away with your profession. I ask your advice as a man of sense—for you are one, in spite of all your crotchets;' and Madame de Pompadour put

a small taper hand upon Quesnoy's black riband of St. Michel: 'You are a man of sense.'

Still preserving his 'Peasant of the Danube' manner, abusing all those privileges which an original always loves to parade, the physician took a pinch of very strong snuff, and asked his patient in a gruff and artificially brutal voice, 'Shall I tell you my mind?'

'Why not?'

Shaking three or four grains of Spanish mixture from his contraband ruffles, M. Quesnoy began, much in the fashion of the most renowned of recent English statesmen, 'You have three courses to pursue.'

Madame la Marquise lifted up her eyebrows. 'But three! Go on, Monsieur.'

This time she beat the ground with feet which (if those of Thetis were of silver)

should have been modelled in gold to make posterity despair.

'You can go into devotion,' said Quesnoy.

'Thank you! I have twenty years before me; besides, I have no intention of taking Heaven for a third husband, like Madame de Maintenon, or for a second, like Madame de Mailly.'

'Madame de Mailly,' repeated the physician, with severe sadness. The Marquise understood a reproach which was meant to convey a possibility of prophecy; and for a moment on either side there was silence.

'Perhaps my second prescription may suit you better: take a lover; make him jealous.'

'Whom shall I take?'

'Come with me and Hausset there to the most voluptuous of Courts; and if Augustus

the Third has a spark of his father's spirit, your beauty will be more extravagantly celebrated than was ever that—if that is possible—of Aurora of Koenigsmark.'

'Nonsense! Did you ever hear what was rather blasphemously said by the Emperor Maximilian? That if he was God the Father, and had two sons, the eldest should succeed him in heaven: but that the second should be King of France. Now, I am much of the German's opinion about France.'

'Take a Frenchman, then, Choiseul, De Berni, Lauragnais, Bernard Molé the actor, anybody?'

'*Connus*,' said Madame de Pompadour, with half a smile and half a sigh! 'They are of no use. Besides, Louis can't be jealous: he was spoilt too early by women making love to him; it is only men who make love to women who are jealous.'

'Madame, you speak frankly. May I speak as frankly?'

The great lady bowed her beautiful head.

'My third course is grave, and if I did not really believe you, Madame, as great as Semiramis, and greater than Zenobia (I am talking like your own charlatan Voltaire!), I should not venture upon it. You put me in mind of some favoured and fertile land which pines and languishes for a particular merchandise; but governed by wrong commercial principles, you never will attain the object you have in view.'

'Ah, there you are with those wonderful free-trade theories of yours which nobody but yourself and that semi-Italian of a Mirabeau can possibly understand.'

'Like a country,' pursued Quesnoy, imperturbably, 'on Colbert's absurd system,

you think only of imports. Leave the imports to take care of themselves.'

'What ought I to care for?'

'Exports! You want a special article, the love of Louis Quinze?'

'Ah, bah! you are getting really stupid.'

'His treasure?'

Madame de Pompadour laughingly shook her head. There was a pause.

'Listen, Monsieur. If Louis were in exile, poor, living from hand to mouth, like those miserable Stuarts, I—you know me—could be grand as Agnes Sorel, heroic as Jeanne d'Arc. But he is the first monarch in Europe, and you ask me if I want his purse—I! Read that letter. I have just refused, you see, to buy the Principality of Neuchâtel, because I love France, I live with France, I govern France, I am France!

'Look at that picture! it represents a

Cardinal in his culmination of authority. How modest and quiet Fleury appears, almost feminine, an Agnes—is it not so? But look above, and you will see the *fausse Agnes*. See how admirably that drapery is disposed—who can mistake those folds—who cannot distinguish that crown[1] of France which for so many years he actually wore? My petticoats are worth a Cardinal's.'

'Are they?' said Quesnoy, drily; 'then remember what I never cease to remind you of, the state paper of Cardinal Dubois.'

'What! that the convocation of States General means a Revolution?[2] I read it once a month to Louis XV. While I live I will guarantee its counsel.'

'Madame,' said Quesnoy, with real ad-

[1] This picture is now in the Esterhazy Gallery at Vienna.

[2] The State paper exists.

miration of that daughter of the Middle Class, who took such pains to thwart its interest, 'You are in love with power. Listen to me.' And he continued, as full of his theory as the lady of her sorrow: 'A country should not care for its imports; your whole energy, mind, soul, Madame, have been employed in importing power from Louis the Fifteenth.'

'Well?'

'You should look with the same vigilance to your exports.'

'What can I export,' said Madame de Pompadour, 'but myself—myself—myself?'

'*Toujours perdrix.* Here is a glut in the market; you want a particular article; rich as you are, in so many ways of export, 'tis a certainty that the supply will meet your demand. If you want white port wine you will have it, even if it should eventually

arrive in the course of exchange from China or Timbuctoo. Export!—gently force your market—not directly, but indirectly. You will get your power!'

In speaking thus, in energetic talk, the Marquise and the physician had approached the window. Her incomparably superb hotel[1] (the Hôtel d'Evreux) looked over the present Champs-Elysées. Both speakers were for the moment absorbed by a very pretty spectacle before them. A young Seigneur of the Court, especially attached to the service of the Marquise de Pompadour, Prince Martial de Serisy, was leisurely employed in flinging cherries into the pretty mouth of one of the most perfectly beautiful maidens of fifteen it was possible to see. If you belong to the North (gentle or un-

[1] Now the Elysée.

gentle reader) believe her seventeen. Quesnoy and Madame de Pompadour had time to examine her animated features, all intent upon her game. Both of them, experienced judges of physiology, were struck by the fact that they were in the presence of a *capo d'opera* of Nature; but of Nature with her eyes downwards, thinking of earth and not of Heaven. With her saucy little air, the very smallest of jaunty heads, crowned by hair as black as the Erebus at which her eyes were demoniacally lit, a nose the most-delicately impertinent, a mouth arched and disdainful as that of Venus when looking at her husband, the shortest of petticoats, clocked green stockings, with a broad rose stripe, and the beginnings of a leg to charm a cenobite,—she looked like the incarnation of a naughty song of Parry, or a naughtier picture of Greuze.

'That is what you must export, Madame,' said Quesnoy.

Madame de Pompadour smiled; she was artist enough to love to look on beauty, and how could *she*, who had moderated Europe, be jealous of a child?

'Martial,' she called from the window, 'come here.'

When the young chevau-léger was in the apartment, she asked, carelessly, 'Whence did you fish that *chef-d'œuvre* of the Devil?'

'Madame,' said the Prince Martial, inclining far lower to the Queen of Art than he would have done to his own Polish Queen (from whom the Bourbons have derived all their bad blood, half their fat, and half their misfortunes), 'she comes from your estate of Menars.'

'Show her in.'

The young peasant knelt down upon

entering, and covered her eyes in unfeigned admiration. She held a bouquet of white lilies in her hand, and tendered it in vassal homage to the Marquise. Madame de Pompadour, always calm, collected, and the model of a great lady, thanked her pretty vilaine, but she beckoned to Hausset, who took the flowers from the room.

'That child has begun badly,' thought the waiting-woman, 'she has not borne to look upon such a present since that atrocious epigram of de Maurepas.'

But Madame Hausset thought like a waiting-woman. Nothing could be kinder to her little guest than Madame de Pompadour; she encouraged by her voice, and won by her eye.

'What have you come for, ma mignonne?'

'You are,' said the prettiest of beggar-

maids, reading from a very dirty scroll, 'the most high, most puissant, and most illustrious Princess, Jeanne Antoinette, Duchesse *à brevet*, a Grandee of Spain, first lady in waiting to the Queen, Marchioness of Pompadour, Countess of Menars, Baroness of Bret, High Justiciary of Malvoisins, of St. Cyr, of La Roche, de la Rivière, Saint Elve and other places, Seigneur of Crécy, and St. Ouen on the Seine.'

'I believe I am all this,' said Madame de Pompadour, laughing.

'Well, Madame, may I marry Robin?'

'Why not, petite?'

'Ah, dear Madame, you are the Seigneur of Crécy, but you are a woman, eh?'

'I hope so.'

'Well, your intendant M. Sanson declares that as you are a woman, he has a right to the Seigneur's right.'

Quesnoy and Madame de Hausset exchanged smiles.

'Ma toute-belle,' said Madame de Pompadour, 'I take the Seigneur's right to myself. Sit down on that *tabouret* there, like a little duchess. So you love Robin very much?'

'Oh, very much.'

'Then, what were you doing just now with Martial de Serisy?'

'The officer in blue?'

'Yes, the officer in blue.'

'He promised me if I would catch ten cherries in ten minutes, he would present me to your highness.'

'Why do you love Robin so much?' asked Madame de Pompadour, with a very feminine instinct.

After thinking a little while, the graceful rustic answered with admirable frankness—for in a crisis human nature is generally

frank, unless it has too much to lose by it, and she felt that she was at the crisis of her destiny—'Because Jeanne loves him, Colette loves him, Margot loves him, the *gentille* Margot!'

'Ah?'

'Because he dances better than *Pierre le Sauteur*, and beat *Jacques Grosse Tête* at the wrestling revel.'

'*Ma belle*,' said the Marquise, coming to the point, 'what do you think of the officer in blue?'

The charming peasant grew red as one of the cherries which she had whilom played with, and if she had told her secret thoughts might have confessed that 'Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris' within four and twenty hours had worked wonders of vicissitude. But women are rarely frank in two successive conjunctures—so she was quite silent.

'Here,' said Madame de Pompadour, 'are a pair of pretty ear-rings, instead of those horrors. I will put them in myself. Ah,' she continued, as she caressed the beautiful and blushing face, '*that* is worth a thousand Robins. What is your name?'

'Lisette.'

'And your mother's?'

'Lisette.'

'And your father's?'

'Eh?'

There had been three generations of Lisettes without a father. This may have accounted for the peasant's marvellous beauty. Three generations of combined love and discretion.

The poison of the great lady's speech had entered into Lisette's soul, and she smiled when Madame de Pompadour said,

'Lisette, you belong to me.'

The maiden curtsied, not too clumsily but very low, and received in her little hand a purse which might have bought half the domain of Menars. 'You will go into a very dull and sombre room (the Doctor here will conduct you), and you will there find a very handsome Prince yawning terribly. And you will say that I have sent you to teach him to play at Bob Cherry.'

It happened as Madame de Pompadour designed. Lisette, like a little demon, thoroughly mischievous and self-possessed, entered the cabinet of Louis Quinze. She found him (all the Bourbons are possessed of the conscience of affairs) toiling, in hard struggle with his Epicurean nature, over an English report of Monsieur d'Eon.

'I am sent by the Marquise,' faltered out Lisette, but her very wicked eyes belied her affected diffidence.

Louis XV. was so accustomed to surprises that the moment he heard a female voice he cast down his eyes, and summoned back, in acting, all the natural timidity of his earlier years. He thought it might be Madame de Mirepoix or Madame de Gramont over and over again. The great ladies of his Court were as much in the habit of playing the part of Sextus Tarquinius as the Preobeajenski guards of Catherine the Great.

Little Lisette, not disconcerted, pulled out of her peasant pocket a silver piece, and began to laugh, first of all quietly, then immoderately.

No man, even a king, can long stand being laughed at.

'What is the matter?' he asked, and fixing his eyes on Lisette, he felt that he had never seen more diabolic beauty

enhanced by all the charms of angelic youth.

'You are as like this livre as two drops of water,' said Lisette, still laughing, her teeth glistening between her lips, like the froth of summer waves when they half blush and half chafe beneath the sun's looking on.

'If I am like that livre, you are like half a million,' said the most generous of kings.

The beautiful peasant taught Louis Quinze 'Bob Cherry,' and the result was that the *Parc aux Cerfs* began with Lisette. Eleven months afterwards a little boy was born, and Madame de Pompadour tossed up with Louis Quinze the identical *livre* which had inaugurated his infidelities whether the young *demi-louis* should be called Denain or Fontenoy. The choice of victories was not great with the King of France and Navarre.

'Heads for Fontenoy, tails for Denain.'

The coin span high, quivered in the air, fell on its edge, and rolling long on its sharp silver rim, at last came up Fontenoy. Therefore, of course, somehow or other, the child came to be called Denain.

PROLOGUE II.

1793.

WE are in the full swing of the French Revolution. There is an immense supper at the Café Corazza, then the habitual, as since the frequent, resort of democratic agitators. Our time is about the first anniversary of the Convention; our scene—to judge from the red wine stains upon a cloth glared upon by innumerable lustres—the end of a Bacchanal excess. Many notabilities are there. The Girondins have passed away; some of them to the guillotine, all of them from Paris. The immortal feud between the

Hébertists and the Dantonists (which Robespierre so studiously fostered) has begun; and all the metropolitan parties of progress, severally hating each other, are at least externally united.

At the head of the table is seated Hébert himself, his delicate and almost feminine symmetry of feature singularly contrasting with his atrocious reputation. Among men of blood, this contrast is often found; the beauty of Dundee was more than womanly, and (always saving the terrible lip) positively girlish. Voltaire, in sceptical derision, asks in the *Essai sur les Mœurs* how Moses could be called the 'meekest of all men' after what he is pleased to term these 'astounding butcheries.' The sneer is superficial, and the reasoning illogical. At the foot sat the Marquis de Sade (the last scandal of human nature

since the Marshal de Retz), then a secretary to the Commune, and fully appreciating the liberty which the patriots of '89 and the fall of the Bastille and its accessory prisons had restored to him. The names of the Chairman and Vice-chairman suffice to indicate the nature of the feast: it was the Great Revolution materialized into its lowest expression, below Marat—below what recent disclosures have shown to be worse—below Danton. At the outset of the banquet, David and Dubois Crancé had played the fine gentleman and had talked costume; as the wine warmed, Gracchus Babeuf (who had been in prison for forgery) had got into an anti-theo-philanthropic argument with Lepaux, and had nearly knocked down Momoro for presuming to agree with him. A cynical paradox was political capital. As the

evening closed, Collot d'Herbois (like a serpent with the hiss within him) had glided into all the slime of those sanguinary intentions which he was destined so soon to execute.

No! we are not wrong—to have given precedence to the men at such an entertainment! Yet lovelier women—women more chosen for their loveliness—had perhaps never met together. Four goddesses are here—three of Rome, one of Athens. That Juno-like and queenly figure, with a face like Barbara Duchess of Cleveland, and that magnificent amplitude of youthful form, is the Maillard herself, the Goddess of Reason of Notre Dame. She has a purple robe embroidered with the peacocks of her Samian prototype, and the profusion of jewels on her—armlets, anklets, bracelets—might have vied with any the Du Barri or

Cleopatra ever wore. She, ignorant of her own hard future, is making love to Chaumette, who was to die before ten months. Not far off her is Sophie Momoro with the Phrygian bonnet—the lance—the pose to which she was so accustomed—suggesting another English resemblance, that of Miss Stuart, the model on our copper coins of Charles the Second's Britannia. The third *déesse* is the celebrated Aubry.' She, too, has chosen the Roman costume. Her dress is of that diaphanous and marvellous silk to which Gibbon has dedicated so many eloquent pages, the *ventus textilis* of Petronius. It glistens, gorgeous and alight with golden palm leaves, and might have cost almost as much as the ruby rings upon her diminutive feet.

But the beauty of the *fête* was undoubtedly the *déesse* of the day, the

Citoyenne Athenais. In Greek attire, she wore no adornments but the simple gold grasshopper in her braided hair—cinctured, like the first of cities, with a crown of violets. Her transparent tunic of the lightest batiste allowed those charms to be seen, which she could not otherwise, even with the freedom of that dress, ostensibly display. It was only confined by a narrow ribbon of red cord round her waist to match the scarlet woollen of her sandal ligatures. She had been married after the fashion of the day—had given another citizen to Paris—and quite naturally was sitting at table with the husband who had abandoned her, the best possible friends in the world.

The decencies of modern composition forbid us to lift the veil from this, in its time, not exceptionally indecent orgie. Suffice it

to remark that the heads of the ladies had been turned in the morning, whirled round and round the whole cycle of vanity, and when are ladies more amiable than after such gyrations? Seated upon four golden thrones, each of them environed by not less than two hundred beautiful nymphs, they had presided in the old churches and cathedrals of the Catholic religion. They had breathed incense, which had been swung before them; and had heard hymns chanted in their praise. The sandals of Athenaïs had been distributed and devoured by a crowd of idolaters. But as both Coupé (de l'Oise) and Julien (de Toulouse) happened to be present, it was admitted by the company that Sophie Momoro had enjoyed the greatest triumph. She had been deified at the old church of St. André-des-Arts, and had administered revolutionary

absolution both to the Protestant and to the Catholic clergymen who had come to her altars. Coupé and Julien had declared themselves impostors, had (unlike the Roman Augurs) laughed in each other's faces, and had solemnly professed that both confessions, Protestant and Catholic, only subsisted through the charlatanism and craft of priests!

It would have been difficult to match this incident in its revolting blasphemy against accepted creeds; but Athenaïs was preparing to cap it by the narration of what had occurred to herself at St. Roch, when the doors of the cabinet were suddenly thrown open with a roar, as of a wild beast breaking from its cage. The creature who bounded into the room, notwithstanding her attire, which might have belonged to either sex, seemed hardly human. But in

spite of the faded finery of her piratical costume, she was a woman still. Her dress blazoned gorgeously forth the tricolour of the Revolution: a jacket of blue velvet, a broad white scarf at the waist, and trowsers of scarlet cloth tight tied above the *bottine*; two pistols conspicuous in her girdle, and a sabre clashing at her side. Curiously enough, however, the hat was *à la Henri IV.*, with long chivalric plume.

Her appearance was the signal for a spontaneous storm of yells, howls, hisses, and execrations from the guests assembled.

'She-Devil!' 'Brute!' '*Réactionnaire!*' '*Girondine!*' 'Aristocrat!' 'Théroigne!' 'To the cage, to the pillory with her!' '*À la lanterne*—the Federalist!'

The men of the party rose from their seats with one impulse to surround and seize her; but with a wild maniacal laugh

—rolling her head round like a mænad, with the glare of a tigress in her eye—she rushed upon Sophie Momoro and placed a pistol to her forehead. 'One step more, one hand upon me, and I blow out the brains of this dainty quean!'

The boldest recoiled in horror.

'Right, quite right, my masters! A pretty morsel isn't she—brave Odalisques all—beautiful to look upon. Ha! where is Rose Lacombe? where is Aspasie Carlemegelie? And not to have asked poor Théroigne de Méricourt. Great lords—high seigneurs as you are, you have no taste, you are but food for the galleys, the bagnio, and the prison, where you have been, Gracchus! And you, Collot! Ha, ha, ha! Rogues all! rogues all!

'To think that I was once better than any of yon idols; ay, better,' she muttered,

with a flash of happy memories awhile softening her seamed, haggard, bloated and horrible features, 'better, better! when I said my prayers night and morning at my mother's knee—for I was once religious—which you are not, my Sophie, or you would not have been married as you were. And then all the young men's homage to the beautiful Walloon! And the golden sun in the valley of the Meuse, with the sweet companionship of untranslated thoughts and venial vanities, and maiden shame, shame: do ye hear it, O shameless?

'And then the silver moon and summer shade, with the loved one by; and the long resistance, and false aversion, and faint nays, and ardent love vows. You have all known that. And the two white arms convulsive round his neck, tighter and tighter—sham type of illusive eternity—in vain! And

then—everybody—Legion—the Devil and all his courtiers; but better than you, Chaumette—and you, Citoyen Nain, who betrayed Athenais, as I was betrayed. For you are the Nadir of Hell! And Péthion and Populus! Did somebody say Populus? Guleau said Populus was my lover in his scoundrel paper, and where is his head now, and his heart now? I stuck them both on one pike—the heart half way down—and bore them before his home's windows. Which of you shall I treat as I did Guleau? Ha, ha, ha! Cowards all, cowards all!'

She had removed her pistol for a minute from Sophie's brow, fixing her nails into her shoulder with her other hand (like a hawk's talons into one of Venus's prettiest birds), while she slowly pointed her pistol at nearly every man's head in the society. They had spilt too much blood in a cowardly

way not to be cowards themselves. With hoarse, hideous, insane triumph Théroigne continued, pressing her pistol anew, and yet closer than before, to the throbbing temple of the fainting beauty:—

'To-day, on the terrace of the Tuileries, where I, the Queen of the Revolution, had on the night of August jeered, and spat upon, and flouted the woman Capet; where I had since paraded heads as fair as yours, my *mignonne*, in glorious proof of *civisme*; I, the beauty of Flanders, I, the wife of the Republic, I, the mistress of Péthion! *He*,' she lowered her voice to a whisper, while she rambled incoherently on, sobbing, swearing, and shedding mad, miserable tears —'*he* lies dead, eaten by wolves; his heart, *my* heart gnawed out by him, they tell me, kissed by the wolves, not by Théroigne—no, never more. But to-day—on that very

terrace—the furies, the furies!—they stripped, and gagged, and jeered, and flouted, and spat on *me* as a Moderatist and a Girondist. They flogged, and scourged, and branded me; the stripes are on my body and my soul. And now, you see I have come here for a victim. I want revenge; I am thirsty for blood, hungry like the wolves—ha, ha, ha!—which is the most beautiful, my masters?—the most beautiful ought of right to avenge Théroigne de Méricourt! Choose, my lords—vote, my regicides: I vote for Sophie. But tall Maillard there is very handsome, and black-haired Aubry, and that Ariadne, Athenaïs —which shall it be? Vote, Hébert; good father, Duchêsne, vote!'

But she had no time to pursue her savage allocution. A piercing scream, answered by two more, awoke another

universal cry of horror. The Marquis de Sade—true to his infernal instincts—had stolen up covertly behind her, and had plunged a sharp instrument which he always carried with him into her back. The sight of blood always maddened him, and he flung himself upon her, griping her throat, tearing her hair, trampling on her with the yells and clamours of a maniac. At the same time, the pistol went off, its contents lodging (in its diverted aim) in the inimitable Phryne-like bosom of the Goddess Athenaïs. A wild impassioned gesture—her two arms flung up heavenwards—a long, deep, terrible shriek, the death-rattle, and all was over.

Hardly human, as most of the men were assisting at this orgie, the sight of blood bereft them even of their infinitesimal share of humanity. They rushed upon Théroigne

with barbarous blows and bestial injuries. They struck, and trod, and ground her down beneath their brutish hoofs; but ever and anon in her insanity she raised herself up, and cursed out from bleeding lips imprecations as horrible as those of her assailants. With proud, defiant air she mimicked with her arm the motion of the axe, and reminded them of the days that were no more, when she might have sent them all to the guillotine. Urged by the report of fire-arms and such a *brouhaha* of vociferation, the Municipals arrived in time to save her life. They consigned her to that mad-house whence for five-and-twenty years she was never to emerge.

Yet what Théroigne de Méricourt said was true. There had been a day when she might have sent them all to the guillotine. She had been the fashion, she had enjoyed

her hour of aggression, and had grossly abused it. She had represented an idea. She had seen it prominent in the van of the Revolution adored like a sacrament; she had lived to see it also far behind the laggards of the Revolution, scouted by the very sutlers in the rear. She had harangued, borne false witness, intrigued, insulted, slain, assassinated as a Revolutionist: she had now been hissed, scoffed at, outraged, beaten, scourged as a Moderatist. Inevitable fate of all political ideas! Oh! to teach the lesson to the fanatics of all sides—Absolutists, Constitutionalists, and Socialists. May it never come to that, O ye English propagandists (when American principles shall have absorbed you as they must in Europe), that the Anglo-trade idea shall be hissed, derided, laughed at, proscribed and

persecuted as a Moderatist like Théroigne de Méricourt.

No unapt type of the Revolution that supper. For after the madness and the death were to supervene the men of cunning. The two individuals engaged almost alone in conversation belong to Robespierre. Himself he never feasted out of doors, he never signed his name if he possibly could help it. One is an ex-regular who was to make some noise in the world, the Oratorian Fouché; the other has already been introduced to our readers as the first natural son of the *Parc aux Cerfs*. Prematurely bald, with delicate, refined lineaments, pale face, thin white lips, grey furtive eyes, and a mouth of sarcasm, he seemed to have outlived the probabilities of man's trust; even, if that be possible, the limits of woman's credulity. He had just witnessed without

one muscle's motion his (civil) wife's assassination, not without thought of the son which she had given him, but with an icy smile upon his face. He looked as if he had been quarried out of the hardest part of the Devil's heart, and he did not belie his looks. No one obeying the laws of an aggressive organisation had ever more successfully traded, during nearly four decades of a life, upon the weaknesses of either sex than Monsieur Louis Denain.

In '89 he had dropped the Louis; in '90 he had banished the *de* from his name, and had dwarfed himself into plain Citoyen Nain. But in '92, when he had begun to attach himself to the two Robespierres, he conceived a bolder project. Aware of, and profiting by, the tenderest part of Maximilien's genius, he gave himself out everywhere as one of Rousseau's children. Inas-

much as they had all been carried to the Foundling Hospital, it was impossible to gainsay his assertion; and it would be difficult to exaggerate the amount of esteem and ovation to which he thus became accredited among the inner circles of the Mountain. Citoyen Nain, too, was not the man to lose any advantage to be derived from human prejudice. In his earlier years he had obtained through his royal father's influence the stewardship of a great feudal property in the Avranche; and owing to this opportunity he had been nominated by the department of the Manche to the Convention. Pleasant, with his peculiar temper, it must have been to think that he owed his seat to Louis XV., and his reputation to Jean Jacques.

From the earnestness of tone, the avidity of eye, the suppressed excitement in the

manner of the two remaining revellers, the rudest student of Lavater's school would have guessed that a crime was in meditation. They looked, with the sharp thin outlines of their keen features, fit subjects for Giotto's Hell—like mediæval conspirators plotting the poison of some obnoxious prince in the sacramental wafer, or compassing the betrayal of some free republic to an imperial general. And, indeed, the ruin of a great house was consummated in the sullen clink of the two last glasses which were pledged at that hideous revel. And now that Fouché and Citoyen Nain are left quite alone, with a low chuckle and obscene gaiety they seal their sanguinary and sordid bargain.

> À toi, l'affameur;
> Et à toi, mon accapareur!

PROLOGUE III.

1794.

IMAGINE to the right acre upon acre of wood and verdure, 'six Richmonds in the field,' all alight with the silver windings of the beautiful Lée, with bright broad estuaries, and flashing lakes, which are 'the glistening eyes of Solitude.' To the left the long level-ribbed and grey sea-sands (the tall moonbeams lying aslant thereon, like jasper columns half up-reared) stretching far away, mile upon mile, to the illimitable ocean. Cutting the glorious prospect far out at sea, like a marine Acropolis, mid sand and wave, arise the spire-

crowned old turrets of Mont St. Michel. In the shades of night you may still believe them guarded by the spirits of the nine hundred and nineteen Norman gentlemen who defended those walls against the strongest forces of King Henry of Agincourt. Like a footstool for a feudal seigneur, there crouches below, in reverential homage, the little island of Tombelaine. 'The grave of the sun,' say Armorican commentators, as he smiles his last farewell, before he sinks into the western wave, to that Breton race, than which he has seen none braver nor more enduring in his universal course. 'The tomb of Ellen,' say the legend-loving peasants, a Celtic Princess, who loved beneath her, and who drowned herself to hide her shame and sorrow—

Past all dishonour;
Death has left on her
Only the beautiful!—

in the still believed tradition that year after year, upon the day of her death, a white dove, mateless and forlorn, settles upon the solitary rock.

The crime which was conceived and ratified at the Café Corazza is now enacting upon this isolated scene. Years after our story—under the Empire—a gang of false coiners were to work with impunity in the islet, so deserted and so savage is the spot. In an arm of the sea, half salt and half lake, between Tombelaine and the land, a small fleet might have been seen of large, heavy, flat-bottomed barges. A score or so of men were employed in heaving down into the wide expanse of water large sacks, which narrow at the top and very bulky downwards, appeared as if they might contain Oriental ladies who had been faithless to their owners, or aristocratic conspirators against a

jealous commonwealth. The suspicion of civic *Noyades* would, however, have proved a wrong conjecture, although the crime was scarcely less heinous. If the Christian Eucharist means, as it does mean, bread for all, the guilt of those employed in waste of rich, ripe, golden corn was assuredly no light sin against the Holy Spirit, which is God's clear truth. It would appear an act beyond the reach of human paradox to excuse, or human sophistry to palliate. Yet, in our own country but recently, great statesmen and grave economists have been known to expatiate on the merit of high prices, and the detriment of cheap and abundant prodigality of food.

The very ruffians who on that fair autumnal evening were laboriously carrying out, all unwittingly, a cardinal tenet of an untoward, if honest faith, seemed themselves

to be aware that their conduct was almost unique in its flagitiousness. 'Nain pays us well,' said a young Italian, Giovanni Rima, to the leader of the band, a weather-weazened Spaniard, 'but the slave trade itself is a joke to this. Many a black have we seen squeezed to death in the middle passage, fair doings enough in the good ships, the *Bonne Aventure*, and the *Faliero*, but never so horrible an act as this! How many lives, Manuel, do you think we have murdered to-night?'

'Boy,' replied Manuel Alvarez, 'Frenchmen and snipes live by suction. This sunny grain is all too good for them.'

'The Madonna grant that they may soon suck each other's blood,' said a tall Italian, in the Venetian vernacular; he wore an impenetrable mask, and his name was unknown to the hireling with whom he was engaged.

* * * *

The Jacobins are full to suffocation. No need here, as at Athens, for the Obol to seduce to the peoples' meeting; no fear of the red-coloured cord to scourge them into politics. Swindlers and divines, advocates and farmers, pig-drivers and Jews, brawny dames from the Halles, coarse sylphs from the opera, and the inevitable *Tricoteuses*—the revolutionary *fats*—are all here, huddled together without order or arrangement, but to all and each the walls seemed to have inspired something of that sombre spirit of ferocity which the founder, Dominic, had breathed into mediæval Christianity. About the old Jacobins there was at least the sublime recklessness of faith; among the modern Jacobins, with singular exceptions, there was nothing remarkable but the vulgar ritual of fear. Even natures the most ovine howled with the wolves in panic, lest they should be

taken for the sheep which they essentially were.

St. Just is in the chair. It is one of the last acts in the immortal tyranny of Robespierre. It was the great and terrible day when he had made up his mind to pair off the sanguinary madmen of the Hébert school with the less sanguinary, because then panic stricken but more sordid, voluptuaries who followed the lead of Danton. The parties were too strong to be attacked simultaneously, that he knew, and that they knew, but each party hoped, in their blind hate, to exterminate the other, through his aid and interference. In common parlance, he held the balance, and therefore, like Austria in all the continental wars, what modern slang calls, the key of the position.

Robespierre's secret intentions are, however, known to few: to St. Just, Lebas,

Couthon, and his brother. Fouché is away at Nantes; and if they were more generally known, Citoyen Nain (*feu* Denain) would not be seated where he is, in the very heart of the Hébertist gang, next to Gobel (ex-bishop of Paris) and Anacharsis Clootz.

It rained down denunciations, and the occasional restlessness of Maximilien's inscrutable features appeared to the vulgar a token of sympathetic approbation. Even the Citoyen Nain was deceived, for he has whispered to his neighbour the ex-bishop that, for a renegade priest, he has done little of late to prove his patriotism.

'Whom shall I accuse?' asked Gobel, piteously.

'I have Fouché's list in my pocket,' replied Nain; 'I will lend it to you, as I am as much above suspicion as the Incorruptible himself. But you must find me a wife, say

the little De Champsavoie of St. Cyr, or the best blood you can find me out of one of your old abbayes, for I have just lost my last.'

With all the nervousness of a recreant conscience, Gobel got directly upon his legs.

'I denounce Philippe Marie, of old Vidâme of Averanche, as starver of the people,' he exclaimed, reading from the paper which had been given him by Citoyen Nain.

Every eye was turned upon the three principal personages of that historical assembly. It was curious to watch their several attitudes. Couthon agitated his paralytic limbs uneasily. Robespierre, whom nothing suspicious ever escaped, with a livid look towards the group of Hébertists sitting to the left, drew forth his tablets and wrote down the name of Louis Nain, with a

note of interrogation after it. It was almost equivalent to a warrant for the guillotine. But young St. Just flung his plumed hat upon his brow, as Ireton might have done during a Genevan sermon, and impatiently exclaimed, 'The Citizen Philippe Marie Averanche fought for Liberty in America.'

'So did Lafayette,' whispered Louis Nain.

'So did Lafayette,' retorted the ex-priest aloud.

If the name had been that of Cobourg, Pitt, or Bourbon, it could not have produced greater horror or disgust. Even in '91 Camille Desmoulins had written of the *léproserie* of Lafayette's school. A murmur of loathing repudiation ran like a magnetic shudder through the meeting. Robespierre—all Feuillant though he had been, was the foremost with hiss and execration. Take warning, O ye simple pioneers, fond

Pharisaical Constitutionalists, who are playing in the nineteenth century the game of that socialist republic, which, a hundredfold more numerous than you, will tread down your brainless skulls in its multitudinous advance.

St. Just never retreated in a struggle. 'Where,' he exclaimed in a tone which had dominated the fire of the Austrians, 'where are the witnesses?'

Gobel, disconcerted, wished himself five fathoms under the earth; but, to his surprise, two brawny, big-built men of the people, with fox brushes *en queue*, stepped forward.

'I, Manuel Alvarez, am a witness.'

'And I, Giovanni Rima.'

In a few hot and passionate words they testified to what was true—that they had been employed to throw corn-sack after

corn-sack into the River Lée; but that they had recoiled, which was not true, from the accursed function.

St. Just arose, and, in the hope not only of saving a man's life whom he believed to be innocent, but in inauguration of concerted and decreed resistance to the policy of Robespierre, his heroic features threw out that peculiar light which only Correggio could have rendered. Brief, energetic, glorious was his inspired apostrophe; its gist being that upon the word of foreigners it became not Frenchmen to condemn. He had governed France; not long, but long enough to find out the strongest instinct of its people. But long before he had finished, the Citoyen Nain had turned to his other neighbour, and, in the classic jargon of the day, had whispered, 'You, Anacharsis, are the Patron and the *Proxenos* of all humanity;

don't allow the brave paupers to be run down because they are in rags.'

Maddest of all the madmen even of those days, Clootz rushed in to take up the gauntlet flung down by St. Just. He jumped up to talk about Payne, the Prince of Hesse, Prussia, Franklin, and to protest, not unjustly, that the French Revolution knew and recognised no geographical limits. All his eloquence might have proved in vain, but the vast limbs, broad backs, and enormous shoulders of the witnesses, upon whom the tables had been turned, and who were in no inconsiderable peril, had produced their effect upon the sympathising *Tricoteuses*; and as he concluded his sally, every female thimble rattled and every female heel resounded in active and vigorous applause. Not an Omphale of them all but would have liked either Hercules with a distaff in his

hand and a corner in her heart. Even St. Just gave up a fight against women (his nature did not understand it), and the Vidâme of Averanche was condemned by the Jacobins, prosecuted by Fouquier Tinville, sentenced by Vadier, and shortly afterwards executed by Sanson.

With a voice jubilant, and the air of a priest in holiday, Gobel pursued his revolutionary rosary. 'I denounce Marguerite d'Averanche, *née* Clifford, as an accomplice. This time I hope I shall not be interrupted by my heroic *préopinant* and glorious friend.'

'*Your* friend, apostate!' thundered out St. Just.

'Now, by the sacred heart of Marat,' retorted Gobel, 'I do not understand thee, O St. Just. Have I not broken the metropolitan crosier into a thousand fragments to

light the pyre of the ancient imposture? Have I not flung away alb and mitre, ring and dalmatic, into thy pure flame, O Liberty divine? Have I not kissed with my enfranchised lips, not the devil's hoof of a Borgia, not the putrescent bones of a Ganganelli, but, warm with the worship of a thousand votaries, the rose-pink feet of the most beautiful of Reasons? I was speaking reason, O St. Just, for I had inhaled it. I was about to say that this time I should not be opposed by a patriot so distinguished, because the Citoyenne Averanche is a foreigner, an Englishwoman, and therefore an emissary of Pitt the liberticide.'

Gobel's strong point—his apostasy—brought down upon his speech many rounds and ingeminations of applause, which ought to excite no surprise now-a-days, as we live in an age ourselves when such things are

popular. If you want to be a bishop, you must begin by recanting; and if you wish to be a minister, you must commence by repudiating every variation of every opinion which you ever held before. At least, we have all seen four since 1840, who have thus sacrificially inaugurated their respective systems.

But St. Just was of another spirit. The fatal shadows of political compromise had never chilled or shaken his self-conscious faith in self-support. He was as obstinate as brave. He demanded a vote. But three hands, those of Couthon, himself, and Robespierre were raised to reclaim the fate and vindicate the innocence of Marguerite d'Averanche. It is true that those three hands at that moment signified something very like France. Like the three legs of Sicily, they might have been her arms.

Again, but this time in fear and shivering, arose Gobel. 'The wolf-cub remains,' he said; 'I denounce Lionel Marie Agenor d'Averanche as an aristocrat.'

Robespierre could endure no more; his long-matured idea of stopping bloodshed was ripe. In a hard, harsh, dry voice he asked the age of the accused.

There was no answer.

'Under ten years?'

There was no reply from the Hébertists, already prescient and aghast.

The statesman, who during the Constituent had proposed the abolition of the punishment of death, did not miss the opportunity thus favourably offered in an infant's person of going back to his inveterate ideas. Strange it is, enough to make any man a Molinist, or at any rate a quietist, and go to bed for life, to observe how men

of almost illimitable power are thwarted by events. No man was ever more in earnest in his hatred of bloodshed than Maximilien Robespierre; just as another great philanthropist, Mr. William Wilberforce, was in earnest in his detestation of cruelty. Yet, and although both were in love even to madness with their own theories, the one name represents the Reign of Terror, and the other the Middle Passage.

Robespierre began like an artist by an appeal (which poor Marie Antoinette had made in vain) to every mother listening in the room, and after he had obtained by a unanimous vote the acquittal of little Lionel Averanche, he launched out into that memorable discourse by which the world, arrested, was for a while almost driven back from its sanguinary destinies; by which he condemned to the mortal scaffold and to eternal

infamy both the parties of blood, the madmen of Hébert, and the ruffians of Danton.

The last he did not mention—*silentio tramisit.* Perhaps he wanted their help to crush a much more powerful (at that date), more compact, and more desperate party. But a far less keen observer than Citizen Nain might have divined that a bridge to their immediate exhibition was built in the carcases of the crew whom they had themselves assisted to destroy. So that night he left Paris for *Ville Affranchie.*

Lucky, however, was it for him that Robespierre spoke set speeches and never looked at his notes. Had Robespierre drawn out his tablets, Citizen Nain would have supped elsewhere than with Fouché the next week on blackbirds from Corsica, ortolans from Provence, and muriers from Bordeaux.

CHAPTER I.

THE beginning of our Century was marked at Paris by many a conspiracy. Among those which have found no chronicler was one in a large school, then called, in accordance with the prevailing spirit, the Eleutheria,[1] in the very heart of the Republican capital.

A group of schoolboys were whispering together as eagerly, and as mysteriously, as if the matter under discussion had related to the Commonwealth. The eldest of them

[1] For the anarchy to which all education was reduced in France after the abolition of the University, see M. Thiers' masterly report on secondary instruction to one of the last Orleanist chambers of Deputies.

could not have been more than seventeen; the youngest was not above eleven. There was a fire, an animation, a spirit in the mien of the eldest, which would have distinguished him as their leader, even if his great physical strength, the first virtue of boyhood, had been less remarkable. His dark, eloquent eyes, his swarthy and enthusiastic complexion, his long black hair, his thin lips, compressed and determined, a sort of haughty self-respect in his manner, gave token of the character within him and of his superiority over his listeners.

His name was Almeric Locart; he came from the South of France, and there flowed within his veins the blood of the old Marquises of Barcelona, of that name. His language was rapid, irregular, and broken by strong feelings. There was evidently much of sympathy in his listeners: their eyes

flashed with his, their angry gestures corresponded with his own, their excitement was as impetuous and marked. The boy Tribune was proclaiming their wrongs, as well as his own.

'It is all very well with Vauriensky and La Meilleraye, and the big fellows in Philosophy. They lick us if the night suppers are not ready or if we fall asleep over our watch, while they are over the wall; that is all fair. No one complains; they lick us, and it is all over; they bully us, but they do it themselves; they beat us, but they never bait us. I tell you what it is—if you fellows have any pluck at all, if you are not all slaves and cowards, we might prevent this devilish tyranny. I could stand any thing else, but that we lesser boys should be made to lick one another merely for Denain's pleasure! And then, that laugh of his after

it! And all that bitter ridicule, and all those jests at our *raus*, and all those jokes about our homes and sisters. I tell you what it is——'

'What?' exclaimed half a dozen impatient voices.

'Why, I have made up my mind. If you fellows will not mutiny, if you won't resist this system of bullying, which goes on morning, noon, and night, I will do it—alone. I should not care so much, I repeat, if it was Philosophy that did it; but Rhetoric, the second class, it has no right, and it shall not usurp it. Besides, I will have my revenge on Charles Denain. Look here—' and the young schoolboy slipped up his sleeve and showed his arm all black with recent blows. 'Are you prepared to submit to *this*? Do you know what this was for?'

'What?' again demanded the same

voices, and the little mob was as agitated as if they had belonged to the Great City of Mobs, and the wounds had been Pisistratus's.

'Listen. Charles Denain had the Sybarite Club to breakfast this morning in his room; Lionel Averanche and I were on duty. They had all of them, I suppose, headaches from their orgies last night, for they were in a fiendish humour. "Do you want to see some fun?" said Denain. "Here is Averanche: he shall charge our glasses and drink to our toast. The health of Fouché!" They all hurrahed and drank, except Averanche. "Why does not he drink?" asked La Meilleraye. "Drink, Averanche," exclaimed Denain. "Never," he answered, very pale and resolute. We were all astounded at his audacity. "Never," he repeated. "Oh, you will not?" said Denain. "I thought as much. Come here, Locart. Get that stick

down from its nail on the wall." I went and got it. "Here is one more chance for you, Lionel Averanche. The health of Fouché;" and he put the glass into his hands. Averanche dashed it down and burst out crying, "He murdered my mother." "Come, let him off," said La Meilleraye.'

'Ah, that is like La Meilleraye,' interrupted little Vincent de Beaumont, who was Averanche's *copi*—what at Eton they call *con*, and at Winchester *tégé*—'he is always so good natured.'

'But Denain would not,' pursued Locart. 'He said, sneeringly, "What the deuce is Averanche's mother to us? I know the whole story. Fouché was quite in the right: it is all very well for La Meilleraye, who is an aristocrat himself; but we, who remember all the poor devils Averanche's ancestors tortured, oppressed, ground down, starved—

we of the middle class, gentlemen, must sometimes have our triumphs. Go on, Locart, till I tell you to stop," he continued to me. Well, I do not know how it was, but I could not, or would not do it.'

There was a low murmur of approval, which was very glorious for Locart to hear, among the boys around.

'Then,' continued Locart, 'Charles Denain had the other inferiors called in, and the big Balzac was obliged to perform both on Averanche and myself. He did not spare us; you have seen the marks. And then Charles Denain said, "I will reduce these lower boys to a proper state of discipline. Like Russian boors, they ought to thrash and lick each other at their masters' bidding, and leave off with no other feeling than that of satisfaction at having done their duty!" Now, do you wonder that I have sworn not to

put up with this any longer. I would rather die than do so. Will you?'

'Never!'

'Are you all agreed?'

'All, all!'

'Join hands, then, and swear it.'

The hands of some twenty boys were instantly clasped together.

'I will now tell you my plan.'

It was soon declared. Locart proposed that when the Rhetoric were in their first sleep, the lesser boys who were in the conspiracy should get up, sit upon them in sober judgment, a sort of Vehmgericht affair, and afterwards exhaust their revenge.

'But we shall all be paid off to-morrow,' objected little Vincent de Beaumont, who, notwithstanding his desire to revenge Averanche, was of a very timid disposition.

'No,' answered Locart, 'our retribution

will make such a sensation, that it will come to the ears of the Proviseur and tutors, and then, happen what will else, this tyranny will be stopped.'

'But the Rhetoric will know us,' interposed little De Beaumont, looking still smaller as he thought of the morrow.

'That does not follow; I have provided for all this, if you will only be at my bedside at midnight to-night. You had better stay behind, De Beaumont,' Locart added, scornfully.

There was something so sombre, so awful, so appalling, so really like conspiracy in that word midnight, that, had little De Beaumont consulted his own wishes, he would probably have acquiesced in Locart's dismissal, but an audible titter of ridicule, that scourge of schoolboys, which went round the circle, confirmed him in the plot.

'Bye the bye,' exclaimed Locart, 'where is Averanche?'

'I saw him a little while ago,' said De Beaumont; 'he rushed past me with a very flushed face, and did not answer when I spoke, so I thought it best to leave him alone.'

There was much of the woman, something of her tact, as well as her timidity, about little Vincent de Beaumont.

It will explain a distinction between Locart's nature and Averanche's, that after their beating, one sought action, the other solitude. The one had faith in himself, and longed to be revenged; he was, moreover, endowed with that rare talent, so invaluable in modern societies, the gift of combination; and he had already organised a conspiracy. The other pined to be alone, and hide his shame, and prey upon himself. There was

a little bench in a secluded part of the playing grounds, which almost overhung the Seine, it was so near to it, and this, a favourite haunt of Averanche, he in his present mood instinctively sought. He lay down against it, and he envied it, because it could not feel; he hid his hot face in his hands, and moaned aloud: and then, as the sound fell upon his ear, the sense of his own weakness added to his misery. This peculiar sensitiveness, keen, deep, harrowing, intense, betokened the poetic temperament. All the anguish and torture which Averanche was now suffering were lights to see into himself, were aids to know himself, and some day, therefore, it might be, to know others and to govern them. As yet he could only agitate, but not create; he could dream, but he could not feign; he could feel, but he could not invent. The time might come

when that boiling and bubbling and restless river of his thoughts should find rest in the Eternal Ocean and carry all things on its bosom. It might be, also, that it would never reach it. Alas for boyhood! how much that is genial never becomes genius, how much that is passionate in the individual dies before it can attain the Catholic!

> The springs of silent thought and purpose high
> Rise at our manhood's threshold; let us drink
> Deep ere we quit them, and Life's sultry skies
> Have stolen their freshness.

There was something in young Averanche's looks which announced his peculiar organisation. They were not so much a debateable link between materialism and spiritualism, as between the excess of the one and the excess of the other. They betokened a great contest, not between good and evil, but between the genius of good

and the genius of evil. They were a battle-field like Almuzaga, where the commanders fought hand to hand.

His destiny might, like St. Augustine's, have a double accomplishment—the depths of corruption and the heights of wisdom—but it was written in his aspect that he would always be in extremes.

There were blue eyes with Heaven in them, which were now dark as the thunder cloud, now pale as the morning sky; there was a small and delicate mouth which changed a million times an hour, irresolute and wavering and melancholy, like Charles the First's; there was light hair, which curled close around his brow, but it was so thin and fine as to augur a want of energy; there was a skin, transparently, delicately white, a complexion which he had inherited from an English mother, and which

seemed to realise Bernini's remark, 'that cream flowed in the veins of the Saxons instead of blood.'

With these gifts, and a graceful and active figure, Lionel Averanche was remarkable for his popularity in the school. His looks had attached to him many a friend. Boys act always upon their first impressions, and are won at once, like Polynesian savages, through their eyes. Averanche's appearance, too, was of that delicate character of which they always make a favourite.

But it was so fragile, so aerial, so diaphanous, that it was easy to foresee the world would spoil it, unless he lived in Plato's. Those eyes, would they keep their glory—if he indulged his passions? That complexion, with all its lacteal transparency—would it stand the crosses and irritations of life? Those nostrils, now dilated with anger—might

they not become distended by natural and more ignoble emotions?

It was no vulgar anger, no mere resentment, that Averanche was now writhing beneath. It was not the blows he had received, not the shame of having been beaten before others; but, strange as it may seem, it was that he passionately loved their inflictor!

Charles Denain was three years older than Lionel Averanche. They had always been brought up together, and from their earliest years Averanche had ever considered him as his type of the heroic.

With his enthusiastic temper he exaggerated Charles Denain's gifts, his talents, his accomplishments, his wit, his grace, his intellect—and these were all of them already pre-eminent. They were so unlike each other that this exaggeration, upon the *omne*

ignotum principle, was the more natural and the more excessive.

To Averanche the character of Charles Denain was a mystery, and worship is made up of mystery. Denain was born a materialist. His fixed idea was pleasure, but he did not run after this, as many do, recklessly and greedily; but with a deliberate and cautious system he laid plans to catch it, to entrap it, to keep it, to enjoy it, to exhaust it to its last supreme essence.

It was with Charles an affair of calculation, of method, even of statistics. As his father said of him, he possessed the organisation of an economist with the appearance of an angel.

The habits of his mind were so exquisitely analytical that they would have revolted many persons (there is nothing live people hate so much as being dissected), but they

were relieved by a fancy which, although it had nothing of genius or imagination about it, was luxurious, capricious, gorgeous, refined as a Roman Emperor's. Even as a schoolboy, too, the charm of his manners, his hardy opinions, his picturesqueness of expression, his success in all his sports, his fantastic cruelties, the result of his desire to probe and know mankind, or, what is simpler, boy-kind, acquired for him a renown among his comrades.

He was generally very popular among his equals and superiors, but either the terror or the idol of those below him. It will be seen that the great difference between Lionel Averanche and Charles Denain consisted in this: with the first everything was inductive; he brought everything home to himself; tried everybody by his own standard; gave credit to coarser natures for his own

fine feelings, ever judged the universal around him by the particular. With Charles Denain, on the contrary, everything was deductive: he had formed definite canons, fixed principles of action out of his own reflection, reading, experience; and he estimated men and things far more lightly, perhaps more rightly, than his younger companion.

The first in his keen sensitiveness made every little thing a great thing: the last in his analytic rationalism made every great thing a little thing.

Those who have suffered wrong at the hands of persons whom they love will well understand the pangs and tortures endured by the youth who was lying with his hot face buried in the long cool grass.

The intensity of his idolatry for Denain made his present hatred of him more intense. There is no idea more common or more

false than that reproduced by Lord Byron's lines—

> If the hand that I love lay me low,
> There cannot be pain in the blow.

Who does not, on the contrary, know that there are no resentments so violent as those which result from inverted affection, from the horrible feeling that you admire and adore where you are rejected, despised, insulted, trampled on? In utter impotence, deserted as it were by himself (that self which was still singing pæans in his secret soul in praise of Charles), it was all in vain for poor Averanche to clench his hands and swear revenge, and imagine wild impossibilities of retribution. Like all those who are endowed with poetic tendencies, he was naturally religious.

His eyes were caught by a bird which was hovering over the golden waters beneath

him. A change came over his spirit, the softness of nature touched him to the quick.

He thought upon that beautiful text, 'Oh that I had the wings of a dove to flee away and be at peace;' and he was relieved by weeping—long, loud, bitter weeping.

A kind hand was laid upon his shoulder. He looked up; it was Locart. He flung himself into his arms and thanked him incoherently with sobs for his generosity; he besought his pardon for the outrage of which he had been the cause; he was pouring out his hot thoughts in sentences wild and picturesque, when Locart interrupted him.

'No, no, dear Lionel, do not go on so. You and I must ever be friends henceforth. I wanted to speak with you about something else.'

He then unfolded to Averanche the plan which had already been resolved on. It

was, in its immediate and savage retribution, exactly of the temper to suit Lionel Averanche's present mood. It was received with a transport of passionate sympathy.

They walked away with their arms intertwined, with all boyhood's graceful affection; and if any one had then met them, he might almost have read their destinies in their glowing faces—in the stern, resolute, energetic, practical enthusiasm of the elder; in the visionary reliance of the younger, who believed with all a poet's confidence in the Perfect, and who had faith that he should realise even his own wild dreams.

CHAPTER II.

AFTER his breakfast at the Sybarite Club—one of those mimic clubs which the youth of all countries so delight to form, like the Mitre of Oxford, the True Blue of Cambridge, or the Oh-Dear-Cellar of Eton—Charles Denain remembered that he was engaged to a great passage of arms in the fencing schools. A splendid prize was to be contended for. A magnificent sabre with a Damascus blade of exquisite temper, on whose pale blue sides were inscribed the names of a long line of Arab warriors, which had been taken among the spoils of the victory of

the Pyramids, had been sent by Murat to the College.

It was to belong to its best fencer. Such were among the incentives to glory which produced that heroic generation who fleshed their maiden swords at Austerlitz or Jena, and who were still under thirty at Waterloo.

Charles Denain was considered by general estimation as the second best fencer at the Eleutheria; Alexis Vauriensky, a young Pole, and his elder by about eighteen months, was reckoned the first. But there were not wanting a few of those boys, men-children, who are precociously paradoxical, who like an opinion apart, who have a sort of instinct for fashion, and who authoritatively gave out that Charles Denain was the better swordsman of the two. If Vauriensky, they said, was superior in strength and

audacity, Denain more than made up for it by the quickness of his eye, the coolness of his temper, his wariness, his adroitness, his ruses, and his feints.

The rule of the contest was, that whoever touched his adversary ten times first was to be considered the victor. It had already commenced when Denain sauntered in. St. Lambert—a pale, dissipated, foppish-looking boy; and La Meilleraye, a tall, elegant stripling, who had outgrown his strength, with a very small aristocratic head, in token alike of a great name, and, as some thought, an inverse intellect—had been appointed umpires.

Some half dozen of the competitors had been cleared off by a restless, volatile, frivolous Provençal with flashing black eyes and a face frightfully pitted with the small-pox. His name was Gabriel Roquefort; he was notoriously the greatest sinner in the school,

and by one of those broad coarse travesties, those caricatures in fresco, which are the delight of young mobs, he was nicknamed 'the Angel.'

'Come,' said Vauriensky, 'we must not let Gabriel have it all his own way. Give me my foil there, Balzac.'

One, two, three, quick as lightning, were the successes of Vauriensky. His opponent had touched him but once, when he had achieved his decade of hits.

Gabriel Roquefort, who with all the ardour of the south had already seen the precious sabre gleaming at his side, could scarcely forbear weeping in his passionate mortification. He would not even wrangle, a favourite resource of his compatriots, his defeat was so hollow and complete.

'Peste!' he exclaimed; 'it's all luck, the sun was in my eyes.'

'Well, are there any more?' said Vauriensky; 'sa, sa, sa!' and he lunged in the air with a little fanfaronade of affectation, something like walking round one's wicket after having hit a fiver at cricket, or the triumphant look round to the *Dedas* after a force into the winning gallery at tennis. Three more competitors shared the fortune of Roquefort.

'Why do you not come on, Charles?' exclaimed Vauriensky, with the slightest possible inflexion of taunt in his tone, 'or are you too lazy?'

Denain's indolence was a proverb among his comrades. He had in the meanwhile apparently been engaged in careless conversation with a group of admirers around him, throwing out an occasional 'good thing,' at the results of Vauriensky's skill, but in reality he had watched his rival's triumphs

with considerable interest. He remarked that Alexis, who had drank very deep the night before, was less certain than usual; his hand shook a little, and there had been something of fever in his rapidity against Roquefort. Charles Denain thought that, had he been in the Angel's place, he might have made something more out of one or two openings Vauriensky had given him.

'I have no chance against you to-day, Alexis,' was Denain's reply, 'but I do not mind if I try.'

He took his foil out of a little boy's hand, pressed it against the floor, caught it by the handle as it sprung upwards, and then, alike contented with his eye and with it, ejaculated those magic words—

'What are the odds?'

'Five to two on Vauriensky,' exclaimed Roquefort, instantaneously, giving at least

two points more than the real odds, to gratify his vanity, and to show that, as *he* had been beaten by Vauriensky, he was quite sure Denain would be.

'Done,' said Denain, 'in gold pieces.' The word 'Louis' had gone out and the word 'Napoleon' had not come in.

This was a large stake for schoolboys, and Roquefort began to be a little nervous. It was, however, too late to retract; so he said, 'done,' but by no means so loudly as he had offered the odds.

'Will anybody give me two to one?' continued Denain, to alarm the Angel still more. There was no answer, which greatly increased his misgivings.

'Three to two?'

'Yes, I will, and I, and I,' three or four voices exclaimed.

'Done with you all: stop, I must book

them—here, De Beaumont, give me that book under your arm.'

It was a prize Virgil, which Vincent de Beaumont had obtained the term before, and which he naturally valued.

The reluctance with which he brought it gave a zest to Denain's persecution, just as to a usurer the pang of his victim before payment is a delight, or as the hatred in the dark eyes of a Christian captive was but an attraction the more to a conquering Pasha.

'Come, this is a good omen,' said Denain, as he tore off the fly leaf with the inscription :

'VINCENT DE BEAUMONT,
'HONORIS CAUSÂ.'

'*Honoris causâ.* I register all bets. Now, Vauriensky, I am ready for you.'

Their foils crossed. A more fascinating or more animating sight was never witnessed even in Hellenic amphitheatres. The youth

of the combatants, their singular skill, their grace, their strength, their art, the intense eagerness of the bystanders whose whole heart and soul and purses were in the event; all these things made a spectacle with which no hireling amusement might compete.

'Bravo, bravo!' echoed from all sides, as Vauriensky pressed upon his antagonist with tremendous impetuosity; while Denain, cool, wily, ever on the alert, but scarcely seeming to move, attacked, even while he only appeared to be on the defensive.

But the applause died away, the interest arose to a pitch of silence in which the very breath was held, when Vauriensky's last lunge, to which Denain had instantly replied, made the score, *Seven all.*

Again the same result: Vauriensky's attack was a charge rather than an assault, but it

was successful. Denain's pass had, however, followed unerringly.

Eight all. St. Lambert's and La Meillerayе's voices sounded like two clocks striking double in the hush of night.

There was a long pause and no advantages on either side; little movement—it was the strategy of fencing. Both parties were manœuvring, each was intent upon a plan.

Alexis Vauriensky's was that of Pharsalia. He knew Charles Denain's weakness; he made a feint at his face so desperate, that it seemed as if the mask would have been crashed to atoms beneath it.

Denain parried, but instinctively left his breast unguarded.

'Nine for Vauriensky,' shouted St. Lambert. Very warily now fenced Denain; not an opening on either side: it seemed as if the struggle was to be interminable.

Vauriensky, half regretting the excitement of being even, in all the chivalry of a generous nature, had almost resolved to throw away a chance, when Denain took it.

'Nine for Denain,' said La Meilleraye.

'And ten,' exclaimed Denain, as with the rapidity of lightning he followed his advantage.

It was all over; Alexis Vauriensky's instant of generous irresolution had proved fatal to him. Could men unmake themselves or change the immutable law of their natures, it might have been a great lesson to him to profit by in after life. But the giving disposition will never cease throughout to give nor the taking to take, and Alexis Vauriensky was of the first class, Charles Denain of the last.

There arose a hurrah, long, loud, sustained, such a hurrah as there is at New-

market when Lord Exeter wins a race. Vauriensky was more popular than Denain, but a schoolboy rabble, like a Newmarket rabble, always magnifies what is unexpected.

And then after the hurrah there came a cheer of derision for Roquefort, who was stamping, tearing his hair, swearing, crying, with all the gesticulations proper to his province.

'Only fancy, Roquefort so floored,' laughed La Meilleraye.

'A fallen angel!' echoed St. Lambert.

'Gabriel, you haven't made much by the sword, eh?' said De Vassy, that most detestable of all things, a green cynic.

'Hallo there, Gabriel, notwithstanding your small-pox, and your name, and your country, and your habits, you will never be a Mirabeau,' exclaimed the big Balzac, the bully of the lower classes.

'No, nor any other *beau*,' screamed fat little Theophile Marot.

'See, he is crying,' said tall, thin, sallow De Vègnes, the sneak *par excellence* of all the Eleutheria; and he pointed at him with his lean forefinger.

'Crying, ha, ha, ha!—a regular woman!' said the big Balzac.

'La belle Gabrielle!' said St. Lambert; 'La belle Gabrielle, ha, ha, ha!' and the spectators dispersed each with a sneer, a jest, or a sarcasm of his own more or less brutal for poor Roquefort.

There are few mobs so unfeeling as a schoolboy mob, so unrelenting, so savage, so fiendish in their ridicule; and there is no persecution over which they gloat with greater relish than that of one in ill-fortune, who has been near good fortune, and presumed on it.

As Charles Denain was crossing the court, in all the exultation of victory, to carry his prize to his room, he met Averanche. There is no inspiration like success. It enables you always to do the next thing so well; and when Charles Denain had the right thing to do, no one ever did it so prettily or well. There was the least possible cadence of melancholy in his tone, but not enough to compromise his dignity as a big fellow, as he said,—

'Here, Lionel, I did you some wrong this morning. Take this foil, and keep it for my sake. I have just won THE SABRE with it.'

CHAPTER III.

POOR Averanche! If he had suffered anguish in the morning, he was now writhing in agonies which were far more poignant. The lower classes were obliged by the rules of the Eleutheria to go to bed before the bigger boys.

He had retired to rest, and the lights had been put out, and the candle been taken away at half-past ten.

He was now alone, in darkness, and the remembrance of Charles Denain's kind words, the thought of his gift, the recollection of his delicate apology and self-reproach, were harrowing his inmost heart.

For had he not pledged himself to a conspiracy against a friend who had shown himself so generous, against the friend of his childhood, his brother-friend, his hero, and his Cid? And, within an hour or so, would he not be obliged to join the other mutineers in Locart's room? What was he to do? Which way was he to turn? What alternative to take? Could he betray Locart—Locart, who had borne blows for him, who had undergone shame and scandal, and for his sake? He flung his bedclothes off him; the heat of the night seemed to him intolerable; he paced up and down his little chamber. He moaned aloud. Again he tried to rest. He tossed to and fro. He said in his fever, 'I must act—I must do something.' And then, for the tenth part of an instant, it flashed across him that he might play the coward's part—remain quiet, take part

with neither, and await the result of the morrow.

But this course, which, had he taken it in a dilemma so important—the first crisis of his youth—would have betokened a career, and formed a character for certain and rapid success in the world, he after a moment impatiently rejected.

There was more of the Chateaubriand in his beginnings than the Talleyrand. It was impossible for him to choose.

With the proneness of his peculiar disposition to enhance and magnify all things personal, he lashed himself into a morbid belief that, whatever line he took, his school career thenceforth was over.

He would become a scandal and a bye-word among his companions, if he deserted Locart. On the other hand, could he ever forgive himself if, upon his account, and for

him, Charles Denain was delivered to the vengeance of the conspirators, ardent with youthful passion, and a sense of their ill-treatment.

He flung himself again upon his bed and tried to come to some determination. Boy as he was, there was a precocious bitterness in his feelings, as he said to himself, 'I have to choose between the parts of Cain or Judas. Shall I sacrifice Locart, who has done so much for me, who has been to me more than a brother, who has suffered and endured for me? or shall I betray Charles Denain, the companion of my early childhood, so generous, so delicate, so gracious, whom I so love, so admire, whom every hour I am wishing to follow and imitate?'

The clock had already sounded the three-quarters past eleven, and Lionel Averanche was still in the same depressed and uncertain

mood; but it was now impossible for him to vacillate any longer, he must come to a decision. Superstitious—which all boys are—but to no ordinary degree, he resolved to be swayed by fate. He would go into Charles Denain's room: if he was awake, he would warn him of his danger; if he was asleep, he would go and join the other insurgents in Locart's room. Providence, in this left-handed and morganatic manner, should decide for him.

He stole softly along the passage, and without the slightest noise opened Denain's door. There he lay quietly asleep, in that placid and gentle slumber, the blessing of a materialist temperament undisturbed by the dreams and visitations which haunt organisations more susceptible. And as Averanche gazed upon him, a very natural change took place in the plans which a moment before

he had surrendered to Fortune. While Charles Denain was lying there in his sleep, so tranquil, serene, and trustful, could he have the heart to give him over to his foes?

He pressed Denain's arm and awoke him.

'What is the matter, Lionel?'

'I am the most distracted, the most miserable of ——'

'Well, you don't wake me to tell me this, I suppose.'

Charles Denain seemed astounded at so little a boy's effrontery.

'No, no,' said Averanche, passionately; and in quick and broken language he informed Charles Denain of the plot which Locart had contrived against him, of his own share in it; and then, in a transport of enthusiastic affection which showed that it was no mere mean treason of interest or fear which

brought him to Denain, he told him how for him he had sacrificed his name, his honour, his popularity, his good repute among his comrades.

It was with difficulty that he kept from sobbing, as he uttered his last words, which were heroic, 'But I have saved you, Charles.'

'Well,' said Denain, and his voice was calm, even, and musical as ever, 'reach me that dressing-gown.'

Averanche gave it with a look almost of saddened disgust; Charles perhaps remarked it, for he added:

'I never shall forget this evening, be sure, dear Lionel.'

Charles Denain had said the proper thing. He now got out of bed, put on slippers which were edged with violet silk, looked in the glass, like Sardanapalus before action, gave his hair the slightest possible wave with an

ivory and silver mounted brush, and was going out of the room when Averanche threw himself at his feet:

'Where are you going, Charles? Pray, pray do not go to the Proviseur.'

'Come, come, I have no time for scenes now,' answered Denain.

Saying this, he glided by Lionel Ave ranche, and passed out of the room.

What a moment for Lionel! He knelt down by Denain's bedside and tried to collect his disturbed and agitated thoughts. The die was cast; he had betrayed the conspirators; but, in the midst of all his self-reproaches, he was still nerved by a sense that he had acted nobly by Denain. It was a sacrifice, a devotion, even of his honour, for his hero. There was nothing paltry or selfish, nothing of personal advantage or gain or interest in his thoughts.

He would remain in the room until Locart came with his band of mutineers, and deliver himself up to their fury in Denain's stead; he would not flinch from the encounter, he would face them, and avow himself as the informer and betrayer; and if Charles Denain had gone to tell the school authorities, there would be still time for them to make their escape.

Averanche was still engaged in these reflections—every moment seeming an hour —when he heard the trampling of feet, and suppressed voices coming from De Vègnes' room, which was close by.

It showed him that the work of retribution had already begun: he felt a relief in knowing that his own turn would soon come; but by and by he heard some more feet in the passage.

There was a sudden silence in the adjoin-

ing room, only broken by the harsh, thin, grating voice of Senazet, the most unpopular of all the ushers. This man had been a priest before the Revolution, but had thrown off his cassock and been distinguished for his extravagance during the excesses of Clootz, Chabot, and Gobel. He had been, notwithstanding this, protected and even favoured by Robespierre in despite of his uncompromising enmity to the worship of Reason. They had been schoolfellows together at the college of Louis the Grand, and Senazet had run second to him for a verse prize, a reminiscence so agreeable to the Dictator's vanity, that it not only saved Senazet's life, but unluckily secured him promotion. Unluckily! because after the Thermidor and the fall of his patron, he had been dismissed, proscribed, reduced to extreme necessities, and after many vicissitudes in exile, and after

his return, had been obliged at last to have recourse to that hardest of all lots—an usher's. He had been four years at the Eleutheria, and each year was more and more hated, not so much for his severity as for his sinister temper, a turn for low intrigue, and a sort of irony which accompanied it. There was a green whiteness, a cloudy fairness about his complexion, which betokened the man. Among the happy and sportive boys around him, he appeared like those sullen, small, black, unruffled pools, which one comes upon in the sunny places of our own lake country,

> As silent and as fearful as a dead man's face.

His character has been thus particularly described, because it will account for the chief incident of the evening.

When Senazet appeared in De Vègnes' room, there could not have been more

astonishment, not even on that memorable hour of the great fifth form row—how memorable in Etonian annals,

When Keate appeared at the dead of night,

as it was sung afterwards: and the alarm of the couple of hundred mutineers whom he flogged at midnight could not have been greater than that of the young rebels of the Eleutheria.

Locart alone, between whom and Senazet there was that natural and instinctive feud which exists between a fine character and a base one, confronted him undauntedly.

He was in one of those tremendous crises of passion, which exalt the young far beyond the control of all rules or superiors.

He was one of those moral Van Amburghs to whom life seems given to lay low and strike down and subjugate the beasts of the earth.

He had just that moment satisfied his vengeance upon one of them, long De Vègnes, the sneak of the school; and he stood before the usher with every muscle of his frame distended, a glorious type of the Roman Spartacus defying all authority.

'Oh, oh! this is the way you amuse yourselves at night, is it?' exclaimed Senazet, and he walked up to Locart. He put his hand upon his night-dress, with the intention, probably, of dragging him out of the room.

But Locart had no sooner felt the gripe of Senazet upon his neck, than by an instantaneous impulse he felled him to the ground.

The deed was done. Almeric stood trembling like an Arab courser after some hazardous and heroic feat.

It was at this moment that Lionel

Averanche entered the room. At one glance he comprehended the scene.

But the truth was almost too horrible for him to believe. He rushed up to Locart.

'Say you did not do it—oh, say it was somebody else.'

Locart burst into tears, the soft words of affection were too much for his troubled spirit. He suffered himself to be led like a child by Averanche, who had seized him by the arm, and who hurried him away.

Averanche stopped at his own room, slammed the door, and threw himself at Locart's feet.

It was a singular sight, the mixture of the tragic and the burlesque—those two boys in their night-dresses, both animated by feelings which ordinary men in their whole life never feel.

The scene between them it is needless

to describe. It was a pantomime of passion, supreme remorse, and forgiveness, not without contempt.

Five minutes afterwards they parted. Locart offered Averanche his hand. He did not dare take it, but he kissed it with feelings far bitterer than before, for he could see in Almeric's melancholy resignation how deeply he had suffered.

The next day Locart was expelled. The Proviseur, tutors, all the boys were gathered together. It was a great solemnity, and meant to be an instructive one. How far it answered its purpose may be discovered by the conversation which passed after it between Averanche and Locart. Lionel, to whose humiliation there seemed to be no end, was thanking him because he had preserved his secret. It was believed in the school that De Vègnes' screams had

awakened Senazet, whose interference was thus accounted for. Locart, whose whole soul was on fire at the calamity which had just befallen him, the catastrophe of all his young hopes and forecast career, interrupted him.

'Pardon me, dear Lionel, I do not mean to give you pain, if I speak of myself, and what has just occurred.'

There was the delicacy of real greatness in this chance apology—'*Les esprits fins sont toujours les plus indulgents*'—and Averanche felt another pang of shame, keener, deeper, and more poignant than any which had gone before.

'No, dear Lionel, I may not understand your motives, but I will not love you less; but I who in all this have done everything for the best, who have acted from impulses which I know and feel were right and high,

who bore blows for you, because I scorned to be the instrument of Denain's cruelties, who determined to rise up against the tyrants who were degrading us into grooms and valets, who inflicted upon them the chastisement they deserved, who trod upon the slimy and disgusting reptile whom they summoned to their aid, I—I who feel in all this I have done well and justly, I am branded for life. I go forth to battle with my fellows; I am treated as the vilest and last of mankind; I shall meet with contumely, and scorn, and dishonour, and contempt, and disgrace, and wherever I go it will be scoffed at behind my back and whispered to my face—"He was expelled."'

Every syllable was a dagger into Averanche. He threw himself into one of those abrupt paroxysms, those nervous shivers of impatience, which showed far more than

words or tears how intense was the torture he endured.

'Ah, pardon me again, dear Lionel, this is indeed a moment of selfishness; but where to look, where to go, what to do, when I am taught thus early that there is no justice upon earth?'

There was a long pause, a dead silence, but each might have heard the heart's beating of the other.

'My career is over,' Locart muttered to himself, almost mechanically. He did not mean Averanche to hear him.

'And mine begun,' said Averanche, almost inarticulate with remorse. 'I have taken my first step in villainy.'

Locart looked at him. They were at the same place, by the same bench, where they had embraced the day before. The sky was as bright, the summer sounds as happy, the

sun as joyous, the waters as golden, the scene as radiant as before, but they did not now fling their arms around one another.

They had both of them learned for the first time life's bitterest lesson—that however true, or honest, or genuine, or sincere are youth's vows, you cannot trust them!

CHAPTER IV.

And other secrets too he could declare
From patterns all divine;
His earthly creed retouching here and there
And deepening every line.—DR. NEWMAN.

LOCART was alone. It was the morrow of his expulsion. The weather, charged with thunder black, sombre, and tempestuous, was such as suited his mood. His was a temper which rarely surrendered to reverie; there was something in it soft, and suave, and enervating, which his manly nature was revolted at. There was even now in his solitude a wild desire to do something, to be up and stirring and in action. He boldly looked

face to face at his despair, and wrestled with it; he sought none of those shifts and evasions by which less resolute characters gain a momentary anodyne. He determined to give battle to his black thoughts, and if they conquered him, he would yield and die; he would scorn to compromise and cheat his existence, and live on at their mercy in more or less of misery.

Yet, sooth to say, there was more than enough in his prospects to have dismayed and daunted far older, more experienced, more seared, more callous hearts. He was the last male of his race. His mother, herself a scion of the great southern house of Cossé Brissac, had indulged in the most glorious aspirations for her son's career. It was scarcely possible to see him, without feeling that there was much in his appearance to justify them.

There was a dash of the Moor in his clear swarthiness, in his fiery eye, in his silent ways, in his intrepid pursuits. Even Charles Denain had been aroused to enthusiasm, in some boyish sport, about him, and had called him, in his half-flippant way, a stately animal. He was one of those fiery children of the South, of that hot metal whom St. Dominic had moulded into so fiery a brand for heretics and Albigenses. If Locart had lived in the twelfth century, he might have been as fanatical a persecutor as his ancestor the Lord of Barcelona. He would have charged with Simon de Montfort, and kissed his cross-hilted sword, as it reeked with the blood of Vaudois and Paulicians.

As it was he had been cradled in commotions. He had heard cannon firing at four years old, and been told that the naughty people had pulled down the good king's

great prison—the Bastille. Afterwards he had seen his mother weeping, and he knew by instinct, as much as if he had himself seen their blood, that it was for his father and her brothers that she wept.

Heir to great names and to larger possessions,

> With a spirit set on fire
> At the fount of ancient days;'

nursed in all his mother's ancestral and hereditary lore, as a boy he was an ardent aristocrat. His mother had never emigrated.

She had passed through the Reign of Terror in safety, and, in a quieter time, had sent her only child to a school, which a priest still confessed, and to the name of which she was first reconciled by this religious fact. And now he was to go to Toulouse, his mother's natal place, and inform her that he was expelled. To tell her that this disgrace

had fallen upon his father's name—to her who had never put off mourning for him—to tell her, who with all a Frenchwoman's pride, careless of governments, Directories, or consulships, had loved to give in to fond dreams, and to connect her son's renown with all the glories of French conquest. Alas! alas! would he not bring her grey hairs in sorrow to the grave?

These reflections filled Locart with the bitterest despair. He had strayed he knew not whither in his feverish rapidity, and he found himself already far from the capital. He was close to a burying-ground. It was the notorious Cemetery of Clamart, the last earthly home of criminals, the lowest, the vilest, the most depraved, the receptacle into which Mirabeau's ashes had been flung in political contempt. He felt in all the exaggeration of self-reproach that it was a meet

place for himself; he walked into it, and took a strange pleasure, a fantastic sympathy, in looking at the graves. Distorted as all his views were by the injustice he had just suffered, he exonerated the dead around him from crime. They had waged, so he perversely thought in his diseased temper, an unequal war, at fearful odds against the transcendental lie which men call morals, and, like himself, they had fallen martyrs to their cold and calculating tyranny. Usurpers are always cruel, and none more cruel, he argued, than those forms and formulæ which, like an Oriental succession, had killed, annihilated, poisoned the parent spirit which begot them, and which a decrepid civilisation acknowledges in trembling and bows down to in slavish and complaisant unreason.

The world, great, overgrown, cowardly bully as it is, ever striking the weak and

sparing the strong, had branded *them* its victims, their lives, their memories, their children, their children's children, as it had done him; yet their consciences, like his own, might perhaps have protested, all the while, stainless and indignant.

Conscience, the voice of God! He looked up to the Heavens. They were as black as his own despair, save where the lightning raced for a moment with the driving clouds and disappeared. It seemed to Locart as if even from Heaven there was no hope for him, as if he were crushed by a Fate like that of the antique Labdacidæ, as if God Himself was trampling upon him. He did what many had done before, in the insane impotence of their isolated and forlorn despair. He hardened himself in his hopelessness, he gave himself up to be possessed by the Demon, who has ever scoffed

in his spiritual pride since the world began. He hurled back defiance to the Gods.

It was a time when the teaching of the eighteenth century was abroad, 'when the rich said to themselves, "There is nothing true but riches; all the rest is a dream: let us enjoy ourselves and die;"—when the poor said to themselves, "There is nothing true but misery; all the rest is a dream: let us blaspheme and die."'

And Locart called upon the lightning to blast him where he stood; he raved his wild menaces, he shouted out his frenzied challenge, he mocked, and derided, and insulted, he cursed in answer to the roar of the elements. Blame him not, O ye Pharisees! Judge him not in your finite judgment, O ye hypocrites hedged in by spirit-deadened forms! Who knows but in the eye of the Infinite these very curses

were not prayers? that that real cry of intolerable anguish was not a confession of weakness and an intercession for support, a cry for mercy akin to Heaven in its loathing of earth's impostures and oppressions?

There appeared to him, while the echoes of his frantic cries were yet ringing in his ears, a form so thin, so meagre, so emaciated, so pale, that had it not been for a priestly *soutane* and for the funeral wreath he carried in his hand, Locart might have believed him to have been the denizen of another world.

'What do you want here?' exclaimed Locart, with irritable and abrupt impatience.

'Nay, these are scenes which it is our duty to frequent.'

And the Priest glanced at his dress, and the mournful garland which he had reverently placed upon a gravestone.

'What do *you* here, my son, I should rather ask? is it meet that you should blaspheme God in ground sacred to Him?'

'Ay, ay, that's it, always a formula,' said Locart, bitterly.

'Yes, a formula, if you will. I put it to you merely as a matter of taste,' said the stranger, gently.

Locart looked surprised. The stranger probably read his thoughts, for he said in the same low winning voice:—

'Why put a truth before you? you would only have sinned the more in insulting it.'

There was nothing of bigotry, nothing harsh, nothing arrogant in the Priest's manner. Locart determined to leave the burying ground; he bowed respectfully and low, and with the natural feeling of a gentleman could not forbear saying:—

'I beg your pardon.'

'Nay, do not beg my pardon, Almeric Locart.'[1]

'How?—you know my name?'

'Yes, and all that has happened to you, all that is passing within you at this hour.'

'I hope not, you will be revolted.'

The Priest smiled sadly.

'It is my profession to know men;' and he added in a lower tone, as if he was afraid of offending Locart, 'and to serve them if possible.'

Almeric Locart drew up with all the

[1] See the account in the Abbé de la Roche-Arnaud's second pamphlet of his visit to his grandfather's tomb. Sir Henry Bulwer, in a book which playful as Voltaire's is scarcely less profoundly suggestive, attributes the Revolution of 1830 in no little measure to works such as that just quoted,—the colour of which may be seen by its motto:

'Di, quibus imperium est animarum, umbræque silentes;
Et Chaos, et Phlegethon, loca nocte silentia late,
Sit mihi fas audita loqui,' &c. &c. &c.

pride of his independent race; he saluted his companion and would have departed.

'Nay, do not be so impatient of a suffering fellow's counsel. I cannot wish to harm you, I desire but to benefit you.'

'Your name, Sir,' said Locart, with marked derision in his manner

'I have none.'

'Pshaw! I am in no mood, now and here, for jugglery or imposture.'

The slightest flush passed over the Priest's wan features at the word imposture, but he answered simply, 'I had one, once; it was borne by him who rests within this grave: I have none now.'

Almeric Locart looked away, with a natural delicacy, that he might not seem to perceive the shame which this avowal of connection with some criminal he doubted not would cause; but, on the contrary, there

was no expression save of a passionless repose in the attenuated and worn lineaments of his companion.

'You call yourself?' enquired Locart——

'Jérome.'

'Nothing else.'

'It is too much as it is. Is it not more than we now know of saints and sages, confessors and martyrs, of cenobites and anchorites, above all of Benedictines, and the preaching order of those who gave us arts and humanities, letters and civilities? Those grey old cathedrals, our pyramids, the miracles of your own Norman ancestors who built them, who adorned them, who painted them, who, I ask you, gave the idea and the spirit from which they sprung?

'You are fresh, for instance, from those classics whose preservation you owe to monks. Take the mystic warning which

they give. Remember that their greatest man, their Socrates, affixed that name to nothing, left no work behind him, scorned to claim as his that which belonged to God, of whom he was but the instrument and the tool. How poor a lie is individual fame! You shake your head. It is difficult, I know, to persuade you. You are still possessed by the lust of individual selfishness; you are emulous, ambitious, about to run the evil race of competition; you are still of those who go forth into the world, to profit by the misadventures of their fellows. You are inspired by that influence of egotism and separation which never did a great thing. You are of those who would leave great names and do little things; I am of those who are engaged in a great thing, and would leave no name.'

'Oh barbarous sacrifice,' answered Lo-

cart with all the generous enthusiasm of a boy; 'you would, then, crush all the high impulses within you, the love of honour and of glory, of fame and of good report. How savage is your superstition! what a Juggernaut you make of your devotion! bear with me a little: I too have thought of these things, although I am so young.

'I have read my Montaigne, and know what he says of competitions, of physician, lawyer, soldier, merchant, statesman, living, profiting, making a trade by their neighbours' ills.

'I know I do not underrate the blessings of association, the only and sole corrective of this terrible system. But there is an association at our hands, a dispensation which is meant to temper all the harshnesses of emulation, an incitement to enterprise, a sympathy in victory, a solace in disaster, the

softest, the most lasting, the kindest, the most natural, the most endearing, the most divine, the sacrament of family.'

'I agree and yet I disagree with you,' answered the stranger. 'I agree with you that it is to family that we must look for a remedy for competition; but I disagree with you that it is the family which you would indicate. You condemn yourself, my son. Look around you; look at that world whose family you would prefer, with all its marriages of convention, and sordid sacrifice of young hearts, and base pursuit of gold for this man in his generation and for his children in theirs, with all his desires to push them on, to get them up, or to keep them up, to spur them forward, to urge them to greed against and to the disparagement of others—what is all this—this family, with its strifes and contests, its complicate and dash-

ing interests, but a great reciprocity of carnage, a large massacre perpetrated, hereditary, traditional, going on now as it did yesterday and will to-morrow, generation against generation, race against race, house against house, name against name? Is that your remedy? Do you not see that, like other false remedies, it increases the evil, that competition is magnified a hundredfold thereby, that the struggle and the ambition and the selfishness are not confined as they were originally to units, but are carried down and multiplied and extended by civilisation, and to the farthest time spread jealousies and feuds, and hatreds?

'No, Almeric Locart, there is another family which man made not but which God has made, which works not for self-advancement, but for the advancement of others—which therefore does them no ill immediately

or mediately, but which sacrifices all things proper and personal and selfish to do good to others. The principle of your family is pride, the principle of God's family is humility. The practice of your family is to get themselves on over the heads of others, into the high places, and that you call Success and Fame, Glory and Triumph—the practice of God's family is to prostrate themselves humbly and sadly, in order to be trampled on by others, and that they call Success and Fame, Glory and Triumph. The motive of your family is self-aggrandisement to the destruction and ruin of all other men; the motive of God's family is self-abasement for the weal and the profit and the salvation of other men. And both toil and labour unwearily and unceasingly morning and evening, night and day.'

'Mammon,' interrupted Locart, with all

the bitterness of a bruised soul, 'working the most and hardest of the two, I take it.'

'Nay, it works openly and ostentatiously—God works inscrutably and secretly. The time has come when Vice parades and Virtue hides, when the first has the world in its favour and is called respectability, and worships openly and in broad daylight, and confessedly, the Appearance; while the other has the world against it, and is called superstition, and suffers obscurely and is persecuted for love of the Reality. Look at the conduct of the two. The child has not arrived at man's estate before the father takes him, as the tempter did of old, and shows him the vast Panorama of Life, and instructs him how he is to make it his own, and grasp, and gain, and profit, and be successful.

'If his brother faints, he is to strike him; if his brother is blind, he is to rob him; if his

brother bleeds, he is to stab him; if his brother trusts, he is to betray him; if his brother wants, he is to starve him; if his brother be generous, he is to take advantage of him; if his brother be miserable, he is to mock him; if his brother be simple, he is to expose him; if his brother be strong, he is to cheat him; if his brother be glorious, he is to envy him; if his brother be great, he is to slander him. Or else how shall he *get on*? The end justifies the means.

'And the young daughter of the world, does she fare better? See her—full of maiden beauty, with those eyes which were made for love, with that voice which might have inspired heroes, with that complexion Heaven gave her, led by the hand into a corrupt enervating atmosphere, where lights are gleaming upon smiles as artificial as themselves, where the many are hard and

callous and the few are reckless and unhappy. But who is it that leads her? Her mother! And does she lead her among the gentle-looking and the great, among the famous or the irreproachable—among those who have done some sacrifice, who have thought one noble thought, who have resisted one temptation, who have given proof in themselves of merit, or distinction, or glory, or honour, or good report? Look again. She leads her into a group whose hearts have been hardened by a long hereditary prosperity, whose blood has been attenuated and impoverished and vitiated by inveterate traditional indulgence, who have never had occasion to think or to work, for whom all things are provided, and to whom all things are subservient, because, centuries ago, their forefathers did and acted—what? A greatness or a crime—*factum* or *facinus*—which

would it be even interpreted by modern opinion? And the young maiden, all artless-looking, all seeming innocence, all careless grace, who gives here a smile and there a favour, and here a whisper and there her hand, why does she thus discriminate? is it caprice or accident, coquetry or chance? Nay, that soft eye is calculating all the while among diamonds, and gold, and pearls, and strawberry leaves—she combines the instinct of a usurer with the knowledge of a lawyer. She knows as well as any trader the tariff of matrimony—and the *ad valorem* duty which her mother has all her life long taught her, to know earl and marquis, duke and highness. And lamps are flaring and fountains are playing, music is thrilling and exotics are blooming, for *them*. For these, and such as these, are the treasures, and the delicateness and the beauty of the earth.

'And while these scenes are enacting, there is another family, to whom its poverty, its mortification, its calumny, have been allotted, and they complain not, but rejoice in working. Like their Master, they have been hunted from city to city, and reviled and persecuted by those for whom they have most toiled, whom they have most enlightened. Like Him they are maligned, but they pray for their maligners; they are proscribed, but they intercede for their proscribers; they are judged without a hearing, but like Him they have a mission and a vow to save the souls even of their judges. And though one after another, nation after nation, has arisen and borne false witness against them, and condemned them to bear the Cross of Shame and Suffering, the Pilate-like condemnation of the Mighty, the execration and scorn of the multitude, it has but united

them the more closely to Him and to each other. What are the domestic ties, which are all founded upon a principle of sectarian hostility, compared to those Monastic Charities based upon the love of all?

'The first preserve in their old monuments and archives the fame of individuals, who have outvied, overreached, overpowered, overborne their fellows. Heirs of the Martyrs, the last have succeeded to their full inheritance, and their family records are sentences of exile and imprisonment, endurance and persecution, torture and death. These are their archives, their monuments, their strawberry leaves, their pearls. And yet they might boast a heroic succession which no other family can pretend to affect, were they to count one tithe of their names of learning and genius, of their discoveries and achievements, their warriors and states-

men, the great truths and great men they have given to the world. But it is not these whom they vaunt or glorify. They glorify the Spirit which sent forth to the ends of the earth men who were daunted neither by tempests nor shipwrecks, nor cruelties, nor ignorance, nor prejudice, nor suffering, nor martyrdom.'

Locart, who had been carried away by the Priest's earnestness, according as it did with his own passionate mood, was so anxious, that he interrupted him, 'You cannot mean the family of Jesus?'

'I do mean the family of Jesus,' in his turn interrupted Jerome.

'How, in France, and you confide it to me?'

'Yes, to you, Almeric Locart, for there is the mark of God upon you. You are destined to serve his Church. That im-

petuous spirit, which turned against yourself and wounded you, and still lacerates you now, has been long marked by us, and as surely will you one day be one of us.'

'Priest me no Priests,' cried Locart, impatiently, 'from Egypt downwards you have conspired against mankind. I seek a nobler vocation. After I have seen my mother, I shall go to the Wars.'

'You are very young.'

'I am not younger than was Sayer.' Locart alluded to the glorious story then in everybody's mouth of the drummer boy, who at Marengo, when told to beat a retreat, beat a charge, and did about as much as Kellerman to win the battle.

'Come with me rather,' replied the Priest; 'come and see how discipline may delight, and mortification become a pleasure; come with me, and fulfil your fate. Nay

you will not; you shake your head: be it so for the present. I may not bless you, you have still many a penance first to undergo; but you bear within you a spirit which the world can never satisfy.

'We shall meet again.'

CHAPTER V.

They have in England
A coin that bears the figure of an Angel
Stamped in gold; but that's insculp'd upon,
But here an ANGEL.—*Merchant of Venice.*

AFTER Locart's expulsion, it was remarked at the Eleutheria that Charles Denain and Lionel Averanche were inseparable. There were many reasons for this. Denain could not but feel the value of an attachment like that of his young and enthusiastic comrade, nor was any interruption put to their friendship by the occurrence of vacations, as Averanche was the ward of Denain's father.

Lionel Agenor Augustin d'Averanche,

Vidâme of Averanche, Seignieur of Picquigny, Sire de Criol, a Grandee of Spain, Hereditary Seneschal of Granville, Marshal of the armies of God and of Holy Church, as his ancestors had proudly signed themselves at the time of the Crusades, and as his descendants had uninterruptedly signed down to the Revolution, heir to one of the noblest of French names, and to three ruined Châteaux, with rights innumerable of the old Norman stamp, and to sixty quarterings in token of past wealth, and a more than Austrian felicity of alliance, was a little boy without a sou. His father, Philippe Marie, was one of the most brilliant among the doctrinaire dandies, who had prosed, and fought, and danced in the early years of Louis XVI. He was the friend of Ségur and Lafayette, and the beautiful Condorcet. He had made an American campaign, had

avenged Montreal and Quebec upon the English, had been coquettishly wounded, and had worn his arm in the most fanciful and exquisite of slings. With all the advantages and the renown of many a good fortune, it was no wonder that the young Vidâme with the old possessions, was much sought after in marriage; but, notwithstanding *ennui* and debt, those two main hymeneal persuasives, Philippe Marie held bravely out against overtures of all kinds, formal or informal, the regular siege and the romantic surprise. At last, in despair at the superior polish of the Duke of Orleans' leathers who had organised an *estafette* express from England to subserve the reigning Anglomania, Averanche determined to pass over into the Great Groomland which exported such miracles of varnish. Fond of horses, as became his Christian name, he lost his money, with a *bon mot* and a

smile, to Lord March, but took his revenge at écarté on a Lancashire Baronet, who was so enchanted with his conqueror's manners as to ask him for a week's shooting to his house. But as the week's stay grew into a month's stay, and that again into so serious a thing as a marriage with his host's daughter, we must give some idea of little Lionel's maternal ancestry.

Sir Hilary Clifford belonged to one of those old banneret families who take a pride in ringing alternate changes on a name, and like the Sir Arscotts and Sir Williams of the Molesworths, or the Sir Nortons and Sir Edwards of the Knatchbulls, endless was the succession of Sir Hilarys and Sir Johns in the family pedigree of the Cliffords. Catholics before the Reformation they had remained true to the ancient faith. Their politics were as unchangeable as their religion.

Marians against Elizabeth, and therefore favoured by James I., they were cavaliers under his son, Jacobites after the revolution, and Tories after the Guelphic accession. There was even a question of electing Sir John Clifford, the father of the Vidâme of Averanche's friend, into the head of the Tory party, after the desertion of Sir Watkyn Wynne (a name that was ever fatal to the Stuarts) in 1745. Sir Hilary, who succeeded to his father some ten years later, had married a Protestant, had coquetted with the Whigs, had been to a public day at Knowsley, and had refused a peerage from Lord North. But notwithstanding these little backslidings, which were bitterly groaned over in many a manor house of Lancashire and Cheshire, Sir Hilary was something of a bigot in his ways; his son he allowed to think in the old Tory fashion of Hobbes,

Bolingbroke and Hume, but his daughters he educated in the strictest Latinism.

Left a widower very early he had lived much abroad, partly because he hated English politics and partly to give to Margaret and Eleanore Clifford, his only daughters, whom he idolised, the benefits (such as he thought them) of foreign education. And Averanche thought, the first day that he saw Margaret Clifford at matins, in her simple dress, with a cross depending from her long white throat, while her delicate head drooped half hidden by taper fingers which Vandyke might have painted—that he never had seen anything half so lovely or so graceful. But when at dinner the same day he found she could talk as no young lady ever could in his country, with their convent-spanned experience, deeply but lightly, of Italy and its pictures, of Clarissa, of Le Kain, of Franklin;

and then, when he had ventured upon some philosophic flippancy, how she checked him with the glance of a Saxon saint—he rose from table a lost man, sunk irretrievably in his own esteem, utterly gone: he was *in love with a girl*! Why pursue the story of his courtship? At a county ball, where he had, as Lord Byron says, far excelled 'us serious angels' in the pantomime of dancing, he proposed and was accepted. Sir Hilary, who, although he liked living abroad, had no great fancy for a foreign son-in-law, gave his consent reluctantly; and the old chapel at Apulderfield Hall never had seen among her ancestresses so beautiful a bride as her whom the Vidâme of Averanche led to the altar. Her fair hair with a long string of pearls braided and interwoven in it as in one of Veronese's heroines; her soft, timid, blue eye; her exquisite transparency of com-

plexion, all these found many an admirer. But who was that tall, graceful, girlish figure by her side, with hazel eyes almost alight with passion, with imperial features, with the thin lip of determination, with superb and commanding beauty even though so young, a bridesmaid by whose side few might excel? It was Eleanore Clifford, the sister. Alas! a few years afterwards, on a summer night when the moon had long been up and the stars had already shone whole hours upon the sward, she might have been seen, by a fountain in the great ancestral park, the low vows of a foreigner echoing in her ear, and the wild lights of enthusiastic attachment flashing in her eye.

And in the same year of that elopement the bell of the old chapel was tolling its melancholy knell, for Sir Hilary Clifford was no more. He had died of a crushed spirit

and broken heart. His eldest daughter had perished among the *noyades* at Lyons, and his youngest had left her paternal roof, which had never known shame before, with a Venetian adventurer.

The same year which saw the death of Madame d'Averanche and Sir Hilary Clifford, deprived little Lionel of his only remaining parent. The Vidâme of Averanche perished by the orders of Collot d'Herbois on the scaffold. His last words (French memoirs with their usual laxity have falsely given them to many) were full of grace and spirit. 'Do your work,' he said to the executioner; 'I do my duty.'

The steward of his estates, a sort of French Gilbert Glossin, had espoused the popular cause with great adroitness and dexterity; had trimmed his opinions so as always to be in favour, and had not only

possessed himself of the property of Averanche, but had amassed an enormous fortune by speculations in corn during the famous year of 1792.

His name was Denain, and he was the father of that Charles Denain who had won the sabre at the Eleutheria. With a peculiar forethought, he just conceived it possible that something or other, if not the Duke of Brunswick perhaps the House of Brunswick, might some day or other re-establish the Bourbons.

In this view, and determining to be prepared for every vicissitude, he undertook the charge of the orphan noble whom he had despoiled, and administered for him the miserable remains of those Seigneurial possessions which he himself had not thought worth a purchase or a theft. Thus in the nursery of a magnificent Hotel which should have been

his own, little Lionel Averanche was reared. To Charles Denain, his senior by three years, he succeeded somewhat as Collingwood did to Nelson, or Goulburn to Peel; but, instead of epaulettes, ships, and stations, Lord Secretaryships, Home Secretaryships, or Chancellorships of the Exchequer, it was to his clothes, his toys, and his school books.

In the year 1794 the elder Denain, who had attached himself most intimately to Fouché, accepted a secret mission to Persia and took the two boys with him. Upon his return, in the ensuing year, he dedicated all his time and energy to fiscal matters, it was whispered to speculations in Agio; and in 1803 (just as his son Charles Denain was leaving the Eleutheria) the First Consul nominated him to the post of Counsellor of State, a dignity at that time equivalent to a Portfolio.

His wife had died in her first confinement, and Charles Denain had been entirely educated, from his childhood up to the Eleutheria, by his father. He had not only instilled into him, and into Lionel also, a love of the classics which they never unlearned, but also had 'grounded them' with consummate care in modern history and languages.

Especially had he caused them to be taught English, which he said was as useful in a commercial age as the chink of guineas in one's purse. He was naturally very proud of his son's beauty and accomplishments, but while he was sparing of praise, and even of kindness, he corrected and punished him by the most dangerous as well as cruel of all chastisements, irony.

With his son's hard nature, however, it did him little harm; indeed, it refined him,

as a keen instrument might give a polish to Carrara marble.

But with Averanche, to whom his guardian was even more brilliantly bitter, more felicitously caustic, than to his own son, the evil thus effected was great. A remark which would have glanced innocently off the panoply of Charles Denain's self-assurance wounded Lionel's sensitive feelings to the quick. He would often retire into solitude and weep with a misery the more enduring from its impotence and secrecy. He writhed visibly beneath some of the elder Denain's taunts, a result which never failed to flatter the new Minister, and sometimes fill him with a sort of half regret, that the Age of Representative Republics was over in France. Averanche, however, could occasionally retort. Once when he had been more than usually irritable, in having all the rose-leaves

of some poet's dream crumpled and withered, his guardian said to him:—

'Why, you are as sensitive as Rousseau or Maximilien Robespierre.'

'And you, Sir, as cynical as Voltaire.'

Denain smiled.

'Or Marat.'

In the spring of 1804, Averanche, who went back to the Eleutheria without Charles Denain, was at the very height of triumphant happiness. He was nearly at the head of the school, and his ability enabled him to gratify his vanity by the attainment of prizes and distinctions without too irksome an interference with that indolence which, like all boy-poets, he dearly loved. He was now eighteen, and the world smiled round him like a paradise. His popularity with his comrades was unbounded; he had heard once or twice from Locart, who had enlisted

in Nansouty's magnificent regiment of cuirassiers, and was now at the camp of Boulogne. He had also already begun to feel all the delights and torments of love. His experience of the *Carte du Tendre* was of course as yet but slight, and his voyages without adventure, but they were undisturbed by the vicissitudes of older passions. Easy, too, as were his conquests and among facile victims, he was probably loved in earnest, for he was very young and (what M. de Chateaubriand lays such stress on in his posthumous book) very good-looking.

It chanced the year after he had left the Eleutheria, that one day the conversation of Averanche and Charles Denain turned upon the subject. They had been out shooting together, and Averanche, who was still almost a schoolboy, felt more than commonly elated at being the companion of Denain's sports,

who had travelled and seen something of mankind, and was already a *sous-officier*. They had finished their sport, which was much like that of the foreign Ambassader at Cashiobury, who said he had had a capital day, having bagged six sparrows and a yellow-hammer, and were lying down in one of the long green alleys of the Bois de Boulogne, discussing all things, the highest as well as the lowest, with that charming ease which makes the conversation of youth so animating and so fresh, because so unreserved.

'So you cannot help thinking that there is something degrading in being loved for one's mere physical merits, eh, Lionel?' asked Denain with a smile.

'Yes, I dream of a higher and more spiritual passion. I pine to meet some maiden with dark eyes, which cannot veil

her soul, who will give me love for love, adoration for adoration, faith for faith; who will believe in a creed as wild as my own, who will consent to leave this world, with all its conventions, behind, to follow me in my visions into the inmost sanctuary, the holy of holies, the highest heaven where the spirit dwells.'

Charles Denain smiled still more. Averanche saw it and continued more calmly—

'There are men who may be happy in love, they ask so little. Alas, I must ever be disappointed, because I expect the perfect and the infinite; my temperament exacts a love which should be superior to all accident, to the accident of beauty, as to that of birth, or station, or fortune. The lady who is adored for her wealth is miserable; the lady who is adored for her beauty is in ecstasies: explain the anomaly.'

'I don't see one,' replied Denain: 'her beauty, it is herself; her money, it is yours, mine, anybody's, to-morrow or the next day.'

'I deny that beauty is herself;[1] it is a far more fleeting companion than the gold you speak of; it is to her soul what the perishable verdure of this grass about us is to the Eternal Blue above us!'

'Pshaw! don't blaspheme,' pursued Denain. 'Beauty is to form what genius is to intellect; and men of sense prefer the perfection of matter to the perfection of spirit—there it is.'

'Will you give me the spirit?' retorted Averanche.

'Ah, you are nineteen,' rejoined the

[1] There should be, methinks, as little merit in loving a woman for her beauty as in loving a man for his prosperity, both being equally subject to change.—*Swift.*

stripling of twenty-two; 'when you have lived as long as I have, you will know that matter carries the day. I will give you an instance which occurred lately. The best-laid plans in the world, which had cost me whole nights of invention and whole days of action, were destroyed by three inches too much of brick wall.'

'How do you mean?' asked Lionel.

'Why, it prevented my seeing a window.'

'A window! that sounds like sentiment.'

'Not always. Listen, my infant,' exclaimed Denain, with his favourite habit of analysis; 'the difference between us is this, that if we were both to be granted one wish, I should ask for the thing itself, and you for the idea which is its shadow—I should ask for money, and you for power. I should ask for consideration, and you for fame—I should

desire my mistress to be at my feet, begging me to love her, and you——'

'Oh, I should like to know her secret thoughts,' interrupted Averanche.

'Dreamer!'

'Sophist!'

'Bravo,' said Denain, ironically; 'you are Plato, I suppose, and I Protagoras. You are Augustine, and I Spinoza. Well, where is the distinction? One makes God all things, and the other all things God.'

'I said you were a sophist.'

'Sophist, or no sophist,' answered Charles Denain, 'you will come over to my views.'

'Never,' said Averanche, very earnestly; 'Heaven forbid!'

Denain laughed with his low and musical laugh. 'I am stating facts,' he added, 'not opinions. Look at mankind, strange as it may seem to you (for, like all boys, you are

absorbed in your own idiosyncrasy), you are one of the same species, subject to the same influence, and governed by the same law. Well, then, man's life, what is it but the record of matter's triumph over spirit? Take the case we were just discussing—that of love —up to five and twenty we expect angels, from five and twenty to forty we lower our demand to mortals, from forty to sixty we are satisfied with friends, and from sixty to the grave we put up with nurses. See what you will come to and go through.'

'Well, happily, we are both of us still in the age of angel belief.'

'I believe in nothing,' said Denain, carelessly; 'not even in evil.'

'Look there, then, and believe in Good;' Lionel Averanche pointed to a sight, which might well have represented the Perfect, and

in a primitive time have even been canonized in some figurative Hagiology.

A little girl was bending over the game-bag which had been flung at some distance from the spot where the two friends were lying. It so happened that Averanche had shot a jay, and, to make the most of so great a prize, he had coquettishly disposed its blue feathers, so that they drooped out of the bag as if accidentally.

But it was not the feathers which Charles Denain looked at, nor which Averanche alluded to. The young form which leaned over the plumes, the artless attitude, the pleased expression, the exquisite regularity of feature, the long, waving, floating hair, made a picture such as Raphael in the younger and purer days of his first style might have painted: she might have been the Beatrice of Dante as he saw her first. It

was a young maiden of ten years old with all the freshness of Heaven still about her, the mute delight of her innocent raptures unchecked and unembarrassed by the presence of the strangers of whom she was unconscious.

Lionel, who was nearest to the bag, sprang forward with all the instinctive gallantry of a Frenchman, and plucked the blue feathers, which he offered to her.

She looked up to him with the look of a Sir Joshua.

'What is your name, my little jay?'

'Angela.'

Averanche would have crossed himself if he had been alone; as it was, he looked so superstitious, that Denain laughed long and merrily.

'Hist! hist!' exclaimed the little girl eagerly; 'I am hiding.'

The mystery of this last phrase was soon explained, as a long and straggling troop of laughing girls came dancing down an alley, with merry and melodious shouts. It might have been a scene of Watteau from the 'Ile Adam.'

'Ah, there you are, you most perversely invisible of little sylphs,' exclaimed the foremost of the throng, as she sprang forward at the sight of Angela, half screened by foliage,

> Like a rose embowered
> In its own green leaves.

'Ah, there you are!'

She stopped short as she saw the two young men lying close by Angela on the grass, checked herself, and blushed very much to have been seen playing 'hide and seek.' She was seventeen: and if the little girl whose name had so strangely harmonised with Averanche's and Denain's conversation

might have seemed an emanation from the spiritual world, it would have been impossible to have found a more voluptuous type of material beauty than the lady now before them. One might have been fancied in the clouds, the other might have risen from the sea: it was the Venus orta Mari, or, to speak more moderately, a Venetian of Titian leaping from her frame, and revelling in the animation of her young existence.

Even the unpicturesque costume of the time, the tight short waist, the close nankeen pelisse with numerous braidings which laced it, only served to display the perfection of her corsage and the rounded forms which still swayed and panted beneath her drapery, as she stood there, flushed and breathless with exercise and confusion.

The maidens behind her were most of them younger and many of them very lovely.

There were as many as twenty; and Charles Denain, who was by no means in the nursery and bread-and-butter line, thought he had never seen so fascinating a ballet. There was something in his face which showed it, for Lionel Averanche, whose turn it was now to laugh, exclaimed:—

'Come, Charles, you will believe in angels now?'

'In Houris, in Mahomet, in the Seventh Heaven, in what you will; yet, no—not even in these,' he added after a pause, 'for here are old women coming against the express promise of the Prophet.'

As Denain observed, the group of charming revellers was joined by two or three ladies of graver mien—mothers, governesses, duennas.

CHAPTER VI.

IN a climate like ours, it is absolutely necessary for one's spirits that we should be able to shroud ourselves when we please in a reserve as dense as our fogs, and it is probably owing to the brisk air of Paris that it is so much easier to make acquaintance there. Certain it is, that a quarter of an hour after the apparition of the gay playmates and graver guardians recorded in the last chapter, Lionel Averanche and Charles Denain were not only on excellent terms with the whole party, but had already discovered the secret of so picturesque a merry-making.

Mlle. Illyrine de la Val, the foremost of the troop who had invaded the hiding-place of their youngest companion, had made a most successful *début* at the theatre a week or ten days before. And it was agreed among all the mistresses and pensionnaires of the school which she had just left, that they would duly celebrate so auspicious an occurrence. Such was the meaning of the *fête* which had peopled the Bois de Boulogne with such delicate revellers.

It wanted but a few minutes to the hour of their repast, and Madame de la Val, to the dismay of the *directrice* of the young ladies' seminary, who shuddered at such youthful and masculine guests, had requested the honour of Monsieur Denain's and the Vidâme d'Averanche's company. She had already summoned far more than sufficient admirers of her daughter, thought Madame Coppet.

There was to be a dark-haired and light-hearted Florentine, the leader of the orchestra at the *Italiens*, Signor Cellini, who not only swore that he descended from Benvenuto, but through him from Flornas, who gave his name to Florence, and who came from Cellini near Montefiascone. There was also an English Earl, Lord Latimer, a *détenu*, who rolled in wealth, and had the taste of Louis XV. for very youthful society. The masters of the establishment, all elated with the success of their brilliant pupil, completed the male portion of the party.

'Was there anything ever so beautiful?' exclaimed Charles Denain, as they came out of the glade upon a grassy dell, where there were two snow-white tents, decked with tiny flags and pennons streaming with the name of Illyrine; other girls were playing near

them, and soft music was sounding in her honour.

'Never,' answered Averanche. He was looking at her, and he thought he had never seen any one so consummately, so gloriously, so surpassingly lovely. Her features had struck him before, but it was not till he noted the half-triumphant, half-scornful smile with which she greeted the thousand flatteries of scene and sound around them, that he appreciated the exquisite beauty of her face. There was hair which was ebon in its darkness, and which fell in rich, broad masses upon either side of her arched brow; there were eyebrows darkly and gracefully pencilled, eyes

now brightly bold, now beautifully shy,

of a mystic grey, like Mary Stuart's, now flashing till they seemed almost black, now

soft and hazel like a quiet lake, as lustrous and as clear. And, then, such lashes, long and silky, drooping, nay, sweeping down a cheek beneath which the young blood crimsoned in glowing and more than Venetian colouring; a nose not quite faultless, but which it was impossible to criticise near lips and chin which were the very ideal, the perfect type of a voluptuous loveliness, such as Cleopatra might have longed for to win Augustus.

And, then, what smiles! for which, like the other, 'the soft Triumvir,' you might lose heaven, but which you would hesitate long before you preferred to dimples the most provoking, the most enticing, the most tormenting. Imagine all this, and teeth like pearls, which scintillated almost like lightning through the low mellow music of her laugh, and you have the picture of the young Illyrine, as

she advanced to welcome Lord Latimer, who had just arrived.

'Oh Milor! how much have I to thank you for, all the pretty surprises which I owe to you!'

Lord Latimer bowed, glanced at Averanche and Denain, half laughed, and said in English:—

'And these other pretty surprises I owe to you—connections of course?'

'Oh no! not even by marriage.'

Averanche who knew English well, his mother's language, was astonished at the faultless purity of her accent.

'How well you speak English!' he said.

'And Italian too!' he repeated, as she greeted Signor Cellini in Tuscan as pure as his own.

'Oh yes, and German, M. le Vidâme;

allow me to present you to my late German master, Herr Hermann, formerly a citizen of the world, and a theophilanthropist, now a pensionary of the Emperor, and the author of 'The Divine Origin of War.'

Averanche bowed.

'And Spanish! ah, M. Castel-Garcia, I must introduce *you*: formerly a minister and the intimate of his queen, now a philosopher and the enemy of Godoz.

'And Latin and Greek,' continued the laughing girl, 'but I have nobody to introduce them: no live men for the dead languages.'

Denain looked incredulous. 'Monsieur does not believe me—here, write something in Latin, Monsieur d'Averanche, and I will translate it.'

She flung him the prettiest ivory tablets in the world.

Averanche was still in the happy teens of presumptuousness. He first of all wrote his own address, then he wrote a declaration involving as many superlatives as one page would hold, beginning of course with 'most beautiful,' and then he dexterously turned over another page, and by the inspiration of his memory luckily remembered, altered and adapted, a couple of lines of an English minister to Maria-Theresa in Latin:—

Me Dea Trina rogas quod dicam rite, 'susurrans
Es Venus, incedens Juno, Minerva loquens.'

'What does Lionel say, mademoiselle?' asked Charles Denain, with the least possible inflexion of malice in his tone.

'Nothing,' replied the actress, carelessly, 'except that I am all the three goddesses in one.'

'And Monsieur, I suppose, is Alexander?' asked Lord Latimer, in a voice so bland, so

saccharine that it was hard to say whether he was sneering or not.

'Come, come, gentlemen, we have here something better than apples of discord to discuss. Come, mamma; come, madame; come, mademoiselle!' And the merry maiden went lightly forward to the larger of the two marquees.

The other was furnished for her younger comrades and the three teachers, with ices, *bonbons* and chocolate, squibs, toys, and every other dainty object of infantile appetite and fancy. But in the larger tent there was a banquet more substantial, to which Denain and Averanche after their exercise were in every disposition to do justice. Averanche, thanks to his rank, which in that dawn of Imperial renovation was beginning to be marked, found himself on the left of his heroine; on his right was her

mother. Opposite to him was Charles Denain, who was taking some pains to discover the latent character of Mlle. Delphine Guiscard, the beauty next him. She was an actress at the Variétés, and had been asked by Madame de la Val at Lord Latimer's request. She was proverbial for shyness, almost to savagery, and her melancholy eyes, at all times sombre, seemed absolutely ferocious as she glanced at Illyrine. She reminded him of a namesake of hers, perhaps an ancestor, who attempted the life of an English Prime Minister; she herself would have obviously made short and summary work of satisfying a resentment. There was a cynical resolution about her lip which made her loveliness almost sinister. Lord Latimer was on the right of Mlle. de la Val; and Signor Cellini, to his great disgust, between Madame Coppet

and one of the teachers, Madame Réné, an amiable quadragenarian, with desperately inexpressive eyes.

Averanche, on whom the fever fits had commenced, was already nervous about speaking to Illyrine, and sought refuge in conversation with her mother. Madame de la Val was a fair type of the Parisian bourgeoise, excessively cunning, extraordinarily suspicious, extravagantly credulous, and yet withal, in spite of her ascribing the worst motives to everything and everybody, in spite of her vile standard of character, a good and kind person. Her daughter she absolutely idolized; but while in whatever related to the sphere of thought she regarded her as infallible, she preserved the most absolute control over her in all practical matters. She never could be persuaded that Illyrine was not seven years old,

but seventeen. Averanche, however, to whom every little personal incident relating to Illyrine had a charm, seemed never weary of hearing how she had been brought up on *panade*, how she had never been even allowed such dangerous stimulants as tea or coffee, and how that dazzling complexion and that satin-like skin were entirely owing to warm baths with bran in them, and to the *régime* of *houblon*, and *racine-de-patience*, which she had undergone every spring.

'*Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!*' shrieked Madame de la Val, in the midst of her educational confessions. 'Illyrine, you are drinking Sillery without water! Milord Latimer, how could you do such a thing, how could you give it to her?'

'I have given Mademoiselle de la Val things before which might do her more

harm, and you never said anything,' said Lord Latimer, with mock gravity.

'What do you mean?' exclaimed the mother, furiously, for Mlle. Delphine Guiscard looked for a second happy, and Charles Denain almost laughed.

'Well, imagine, Mesdames, that when I wished to make Mlle. de la Val a little present the other day, in homage to her delightful acting, she chose—what do you think?'

'Shawls—diamonds—a pony carriage—a villa?' guessed different people.

'A bouquet?' guessed Delphine, in order to convey that she took nothing more valuable herself.

'An inscription on the *Grand Livre*?' hazarded Denain.

'Monsieur is the nearest to it; she asked me for a book—Bayle's Dictionary!' Every-

body seemed surprised except Madame de la Val, who looked rather proud without knowing exactly why. Mlle. Guiscard's very thin and very envious lips almost audibly murmured *précieuse.* Perhaps Illyrine heard her, for she said in a low tone to Lionel,

'Do you think me a *Blue*?'

Averanche looked as if he thought her all the colours of Heaven, the Iris of Cardinal Bernis's madrigal, but he was too much in love to say so.

'Remember you saw me first playing at hide and seek.'

'Do you deign to care what I think?' asked Averanche, timidly.

'Why not?' replied Illyrine.

'Ah, incomprehensible and beautiful, if I dared to tell you half I thought: how I am won by your singular loveliness, how I am

dazzled by your rare intelligence, how very fair and glorious——'

'Monsieur, I perceive, is a poet.'

Lionel defended himself, and they engaged in one of those flint-and-steel, strike-a-light conversations which minister so much to the sacred flame. At last she cut short one of his most passionate declarations by asking with adorable childishness for a sugar-plum.

'Lord Latimer, you are silent; moralising, meditating. What are you thinking of?' asked Illyrine of her left-hand neighbour.

Lord Latimer, who had all the *aplomb* and self-assurance of a great English aristocrat, who had never been thwarted in anything from his cradle, had been as silent and self-engrossed for half an hour as if the company around him had all been his

lackeys. His eyes, of a pale rainy blue, were fixed upon the little children, whose supper was over, and who were playing and romping in all kinds of graceful groups and attitudes.

'I was thinking,' he answered, rather drily, 'whether those children or you were the happier.'

'There is no difference,' interrupted Madame de la Val.

'Of course not, as far as conscience is concerned, but perhaps a little as to experience,' said Delphine Guiscard.

'Oh! nobody can be so happy as I am now,' said Illyrine, hurriedly: Lionel felt all the magnetism of the remark.

'The sight of those children makes me anything but happy,' said Lord Latimer; 'in my country there are great statesmen, who debate whether the note of the nightingale

be sad or merry;[1] now, does the sight of those children make one most glad or sorry?'

'Why should they make you sorry?'

'Ah! that is the question.'

'Because the next time they play, even *they* will be older,' said Denain.

Lord Latimer nodded approbation. Not yet five and thirty Lord Latimer was already as renowned for his feats of profligacy as his ancestors had been for their feats of arms. His father had been honourably mentioned in the Diaboliad; and he did his best not to belie his paternity. He belonged, too, to that school of debauchery which married profound thought with profound practice. He had played *quinze* at night with Ossory, Charles Fox, Morpeth, Fitzpatrick, March,

[1] Mr. Fox and the Duke of Devonshire.

shared half the Duke's[1] formal supper, and walked home with Sheridan in the morning. Like George Selwyn, he considered 'all thinking as but a waste of thought' which did not relate immediately to self. He was as fond, too, as Selwyn of contrasts, and if he did not go from hazard to an execution, it was because he thought the excitement too coarse and flagrant. But he loved to trace the intimate relations between excess and decrepitude, vanity and decay, debauchery and death. He could understand why Henry III. of France wore a chaplet of children's skulls at his orgies, and why his festal attire was embroidered with crossbones and death's heads. He appreciated Louis XV., who was never tired of talking about death, who gazed from a balcony at Versailles upon the funeral

[1] Of Devonshire.

of Madame de Pompadour, and who went to look at his Queen the moment he heard she was dead, although he rarely visited her while living. There was something Egyptian in his very pleasures, and Denain's quaint material remark was just of the nature to strike him. Wishing, perhaps, to try Charles a little farther, he continued the conversation.

'Monsieur, I perceive, sees things as they are: children have always seemed to me one of the strongest proofs against the genuineness of sentiment. Men never are in love with them, and yet their innocence, beauty, candour, freshness, purity, all the qualities which poets rave about, are indisputable.'

'Then you do not believe in Platonic love?' asked Charles Denan.

'Yes. *Afterwards*,' said Lord Latimer, demurely.

'But are men never in love with children? Remember Vergniaud,' suggested Averanche.

'What is the story?'

'Oh, Vergniaud was desperately in love with a little girl thirteen years old, Adèle de Sauvan; and the morning of his execution he sent her his watch, with their names linked together, which he had scratched with his penknife.'

'But do you know what the Girondins did the night before that execution? that goes entirely the other way,' asked Illyrine; 'they put to the vote, at their memorable supper, spirit or matter? Immortality or none? and matter carried it by a majority of only one vote; and that one vote was Verginaud's.'

'This is the same conversation we had this very afternoon,' observed Denain. 'Lionel, there, is a confirmed Spiritua-

list, more than a Cartesisan, even a Romanticist.'

'Sing us a song then, M. le Vidâme!' said Cellini, who was getting rather tipsy, having nothing better to do, and whose only idea of romance was the *gai-sçavoir*.

'Oh, no songs,' said Illyrine, 'unless M. Castel-Garcia will sing one.'

M. Castel-Garcia, a real old grandee, brown, thin, and compact as a good cigar, with blue blood in his veins, looked as black as the Escurial. Lord Latimer, who had a sort of a notion that in that age of revolutions his own nobility might one day be reduced as low as M. Castel-Garcia's, came to his aid.

'Come, Cellini, give us a toast.'

'A toast! a toast!' shouted the Italian, and he whirled his glass round his head, till the flames of the mantling punch flashed

around it like a halo round a saint or a glory round a warrior.

'Ladies and gentlemen—as they say in that Eldorado of Artists, England—my ancestors the Romans——'

'Oh, don't begin so far back,' said Lord Latimer. 'My ancestors the Romans ——'

'Is it after the affair of the Sabines?' asked Denain.

'Or the affair of the Tarquins?' said Delphine Guiscard. 'My ancestors the Romans ——'

'Empire! Empire! Consulates are out of fashion,' exclaimed Illyrine.

'Come down to Arminius,' said the German with his mouth full; the only words he had yet uttered.

'My ancestors the Romans,' repeated Signor Cellini, dwelling more upon the phrase with every successive interruption,

with all the perseverance of M. Guizot (in the grandest passage of his great life) on the fact that he too had been great. At length, like that superb and haughty rhetorician, he watched his opportunity and dashed on with his sentence.

'My ancestors the Romans had a custom of throwing pearls and sapphires and precious stones into their goblets, when they wished to do honour to a sentiment. I challenge for my toast contributions as costly. I beg you but to look into the glass. Throw sapphire glances into it, Mlle. Guiscard! smile pearls upon it Mlle. de la Val! let your wit flash around it, my lord! sigh your maiden sigh towards it, M. le Vidâme! was ever a beaker so nobly freighted, so preciously charged? Ladies and gentlemen, I quaff this glass, in honour

of Thalia's youngest, fairest, most triumphant daughter, Mlle. Illyrine de la Val!'

Loud bravos followed his harangue. Denain's, perhaps, were a little faint, for he saw Delphine's lips getting as white as Mme. de Pompadour's with suppressed hate. As for Mme. de la Val she thought it was impossible for eloquence to soar higher than Signor Cellini's.

'Illyrine, Illyrine, my child, what can you say in reply to such beautiful compliments,' she exclaimed, in the wildness of her very maternal joy. Illyrine was, however, in her element the moment *persiflage* began.

'I must not reply, mamma; but if some of these gentlemen who have all day long said so many pretty things *to* me, will only now condescend to say some of these pretty things *for* me, it will be so kind of them. Come, Lord Latimer; come, M. Denain; come,

M. Castel-Garcia ; come, M. Herrman ; come, M. d'Averanche.

Averanche thought to himself that she had turned everybody else into ridicule before him, and he felt happy even for such a favour. It was his first love.

'Well, gentlemen,' pursued Illyrine, looking round archly—'all silent.'

'Speech is silver, silence is golden,' murmured Lionel, who had been to Persia and remembered the proverb.

'And love, which is a little of both, is that silver-gilt, Leo?' asked Charles Denain.

'Monsieur is so ready, will he not speak for me?' asked Illyrine, rather sharply.

'Certainly,' said Denain, and in another moment he was on his legs.

'I will speak *for* you, fair lady. I will say *for* you, that you have the dignity of Mlle. Georges, but that you never rant;

that your voice is as penetrating as Mlle. Duchesnois, but that your figure is as perfect as hers is the contrary; that you are as elegant as Mlle. Mars, but with far more original genius; that you are as likely to marry a Prince as Mme. Souberteau, but you will bear far more beauty as a dower; that you are as lively as Mlle. Bourgoing, but with no vulgarity; that —to sum up, I can pay you no higher compliment, than that you have the grace, the delicacy, the passion, the loveliness of Mlle. Delphine Guiscard. I need not continue—can I say more *for* you?'

It was impossible to speak more mischievously. Delphine Guiscard smiled through her superb scowl—which, like the young Tiberius, said 'I hate you,' while she bowed the very reverse to Charles; and Lord Latimer, who delighted in the prospect of a

row between the women, laughed that detestable laugh, which the devil must so love, over wounded feelings and mortified humanity.

But Illyrine pretended to take Denain's compliments as serious; she smiled her most gracious smile, and affected to rally M. Denain for making so bad a *calembour* on the word *for*.

She had not, however, with her quickness failed to notice Lord Latimer's laugh, and she said in a low tone to Averanche :—

'And that man, whom my pain would delight far more than my pleasure, thinks I do not see through him!'

Lionel was in ecstasies to be treated as a confidant.

'Do you know why you please me, M. le Vidâme?

Averanche quivered—his soul shrank

within him to hear so sacred a thought so carelessly treated.

'Because I like contrasts, and you, as yet, are all heart, while I am all this;' and she touched her statuesque and Pallas-like head.

'Surely, you have some heart?'

'None.'

'Some imagination, then; I see it in your eyes?'

'Yes, it is my weak point: but I have no feeling. Do not think me a monster.'

'I!'

'Good-bye.' She allowed her hand to touch his for a moment, and then suddenly rising, exclaimed, 'Who will come and play with the children?'

Madame de la Val hurried after her.

Lord Latimer looked at his watch and offered Charles Denain a seat back to Paris in his carriage.

The party gradually dispersed. An hour afterwards Lionel Averanche found himself alone, in the dusk of evening, leaning against a tree, whence he could see where Illyrine had sat, while he tried to recall every change of her features, every modulation of her tone, every trivial incident of the evening. He remembered them all; he was entranced in the most delicious of reveries.

The tiniest of little hands was on a sudden put into his.

'I have come to thank you once more. Play is all over now.'

It was the little lady of the wood.

'And is Mlle. de la Val gone home?'

'Oh, yes, long ago.'

'How you must have loved her at school?'

'Oh so much; but I love you too, and shall often think of you.'

'People forget so soon,' said Averanche, absently.

'Ah, but I shall look at these feathers and remember you: they are blue too, but not like your eyes: those are more like heaven.'

Averanche kissed the little hand of the girl of ten years old. There could not be a more genuine compliment.

CHAPTER VII.

IN the succeeding year Lionel Averanche had left the Eleutheria, and by the interest of his guardian had already been promoted in the army. Monsieur Denain had become a high state-functionary, below the Arch Treasurer in rank, but far superior to him in influence. He had made himself nearly as necessary to Napoleon as Daru, in the vast financial preparations for the first Imperial campaign. Essentially a man of combination and resource, with the clearest head and the coldest heart, he added to these rare administrative gifts the exquisite

finish of manners which distinguished the school of R. K. de Semorville and Talleyrand. He was at once an *homme d'état*, and a courtier, and therefore especially formed to succeed with a dynasty which required social accomplishment scarcely less than genius for affairs. It was, therefore, without difficulty that he had got Charles Denain to be nominated on Berthier's staff, 'the handsome staff,' as it was called; and Averanche, whose appointment as a private of the guard was merely formal, already found himself, through the same influence, a sub-lieutenant. The frame of the old revolutionary equality was still preserved in the army, but it was already virtually null. And many a barrack was full of grumblers who murmured with some justice at these boy-promotions, and who

declared that the *ci-devants* themselves had not been worse.

Lionel Averanche and Charles Denain, who lived together as inseparably as their military duties would permit, threw themselves with all the ardour of their young years into the gaieties of the capital. Nor to their hot and Pellæan temper was one world enough. They not only lived in brilliant society, in the old Faubourg St. Germain, in the magnificent hotels of the newly created Marshals, at the Elysée Napoleon, or the Tuileries, but in a more dangerous and enervating world, the *coulisses* of operas, and the *boudoirs* of actresses. The gardens of Bontin, Marbeuf, Vanpallière (the Mabille and Ranelagh of half a century ago), were frequented by them on the same principle of universal excitement which brings very young dandies in England to

sup at Bob Croft's, after they have perhaps dined with a royal duke or a minister of state. Their existence acted separately upon them in the way it might be supposed to do. There are some characters whom pleasure becomes, to whom it delights to impart the light and rose-coloured tints of the laughing hours which they sport with. There was a meaning in the ancient legend that Cypris sprang out of froth. Certain it is that, whether Charles Denain was only fulfilling the conditions of his epicurean nature or not, he grew more self-confident with his every moment of intemperate life. Like some tropical flower, the brilliant attributes of his nature expanded in the hot-house atmosphere of artificial voluptuousness. His very appearance was refined by it; experience, wit, knowledge, power of action, all were

improved and increased, enlarged and strengthened.

It was not so with Averanche. Intended for a more ideal, purer, loftier atmosphere, he languished amidst these uncongenial, sweet, and perfumed regions. He bore upon his countenance the visible marks that he was not obeying the law of his organisation, that he was dissatisfied with himself, that he was a rebel to his nature, and that in his inner self he was ever regretting the treason. His boyish buoyancy of spirit had entirely disappeared, little of his early ingenuousness remained. One night at a man-supper at Robert's, where he had been unusually silent and abstracted, his glance chanced to light on Lord Latimer's features, swollen but haggard, seamed with the cordage of a hundred lines, his fixed, hard rigidity of look contrasting with the nervous twitches of his

mouth. 'Such will be my fate,' he thought, and shuddered.

'A glass of Clos-Vougeot, eh! Averanche?' exclaimed Lord Latimer, who had caught his eye.

They clinked their glasses together. Averanche felt while he did it as if he had fulfilled his destiny.

'Shall you go to Mme. de Ravenna's to-morrow night?' asked Charles Denain of Lord Latimer.

'I must, I suppose, put on harness for once. I want to see this new dance Irénis has got up.'

'Ah! it will be worth seeing; a game of chess danced in a quadrille,' said Denain.

'Does it last long?'

'Oh, no! they only represent the fool's mate; besides, there would not be time, as there are endless entertainments both before

and after,' replied Charles; 'Hungarian quadrilles, *bal paré*, a fair, and a play.'

'To be sure, I had forgotten: it begins with an act of the *Misanthrope*, and the Illyrine acts Célimène.'

The name chimed in the midst of Avc ranche's thoughts like an alarm; for he still preserved the memory of his boyhood's first love in his inmost soul, like a secret talisman, in the virtue of which he fondly believed. He had been to see her every day in the first week after the *fête* at the Bois de Boulogne. Mme. de la Val, who had enquired into his prospects, forbad him the house. But even this annoyed him less than the inexplicable coquettishness of Illyrine: now she encouraged, now discouraged him; now she listened if he spoke to her, now she contradicted, thwarted, vexed him. He went to see her, night after night, as she acted;

sometimes, he thought, she seemed pleased to recognise him, at other times annoyed; but after vain efforts to break the duenna-like guard which her mother had imposed, Lionel, seduced by Charles Denain's example, had given himself up to pleasure with all the zeal of a noviciate and all the recklessness of disappointment.

Early, very early the next evening, now that he knew Mlle. de la Val was to act in the theatricals at the Princesse de Ravenna's, Averanche made his bow to the lady of the house. She was a soft-eyed and low-voiced Italian with whose fame all Paris was then ringing, because, with beauty to bring the world in homage to her feet, she had preferred a life of reflection and study. Her renown for beneficence to men of letters was only second to her own literary fame. She brought, moreover, into her learned pursuits

all those tender feelings which a woman alone possesses. It was hard to determine whether she seemed most amiable in restoring forgotten authors who had been unjustly depreciated by a faithless and superficial age, in rendering to them discoveries which others had pilfered; or when she was seen on angelic errands in the Rue des Quatre Vents, and the bare poverty-haunted streets of the Quartier-Latin. A blind old man with a world-famous name lived with her, and while he dictated immortal works, and she ministered to him, it was impossible not to recall the thought of Milton and his daughter.

The sumptuous splendour of her magnificent hotel, illuminated by thousands of lights, was Oriental in its bewildering and almost magical effects. The Emperor, who had himself asked for the *fête*, the Empress,

the Imperial Family, the King and Queen of Etruria, reigning princes and grand dukes without number, were among the guests. It was the first great reception given by an individual since the coronation. This alone was sufficient to make it memorable among the courtiers there. But the Emperor lost no opportunity of marking his favour to one who brought so much glory to his capital, and who lived so much among literary people, without encouraging any fantastic ideology, as the Princess of Ravenna.

She had met the Imperial retinue at the top of the broad marble stairs. The Emperor had embraced her, not once, but twice.

'Once more,' he had said, after his first salute, 'for the King of Italy; you are twice my subject.'

After this, it is needless to say, that the whole world of Paris in her saloons vied in

'Ish, ish!' interrupted the pale-haired blonde, who was shocked to hear the Empress alluded to so disrespectfully; 'ish! Mme. Lannes will hear you.'

'Which is she?' asked the little round-faced woman with red bows; 'one does not know half these new people?' She herself had been sister to a Director, and had for half a year done the honours of the Luxembourg.

'There, that beautiful complexion half hidden by the large Spanish fan—there, close by you.'

'Beautiful complexion; well, I do not think so,' replied the lady of the acidulated expression; 'what a pity, too, she thinks so much of it.'

'You heard of Charles Denain's delightful impertinence to her the other night? They were playing at "What is my thought like?"

at Mme. Ney's; well, Mme. Lannes, expecting a compliment from the men, said in her most languishing way, "Je voudrais être pêche." "Et moi pêcheur," said that charming Charles Denain.'

'How handsome Monsieur Charles Denain is,' said the tender blonde, blushing even through her rouge.

'And so agreeable,' said the ex-sovereign of the Luxembourg.

'Yes, he has wit,' allowed the sharp-featured lady.

'Charles is getting on even here,' thought Averanche.

But a loud, spontaneous, almost general 'hush,' a few minutes later, rid him of his tormentors.

Mlle. de la Val's acting had already won upon the spectators. It could hardly be otherwise. Very ambitious, and with powers

of mind to which few men even could pretend, Illyrine put forth all her energy in acting at such a moment; the part, too, suited her admirably; the intense, innate, and irreclaimable coquetry of Célimène never, as he thought, found a happier or more sympathetic representative. Averanche followed the piece, scene after scene, and act after act, with painful interest.

He thought that he had never seen Illyrine more natural, more perfect, more herself. At the end of the play, the Empress had flung a bouquet on the temporary stage, the Emperor himself had applauded, and Mlle. de la Val's name was in every mouth.

Averanche, who was almost as much excited as if the success had been his own, yearned to make his escape to congratulate her. With all the daring hardihood of a

boy he had already nearly forced his way out, utterly regardless of dignitaries and patents of precedence of all kinds. He had nearly reached the door, when in his precipitancy he all but stumbled over the foot of a lady who was reclining in graceful lassitude on a sofa. Her eyes were of the rare veiled glow, the haze and the lustre, the softness and the fire of the Greeks. Averanche bent low before them, even down to the exquisite foot he had injured.

'Ten thousand pardons, Madame. It was so small, it was invisible.'

'Ah! there you are at last!' exclaimed Illyrine, as she gave him her hand with a frank joy that was beyond all feigning. 'I am so glad to see you. What have you done with yourself?—one never sees you.'

Averanche did not kiss the hand she proffered to him, that might have seemed a

mere compliment, but he said, reproachfully;—

'You never see me; whose fault is that?'

'Mamma's; no, not mamma's, but the fault of all those odious people who had been talking of us to her.'

Illyrine spoke very low, but there was a feeling in her tone which touched Averanche. Besides, the *us* flattered him; it was pleasant to hear that he had been in any way coupled with her. He spoke to her a little longer, and ventured even to allude to his own feelings since he had seen her last; but Mme. de la Val's eye warned him, and he made way for other and very different congratulations. Bye-and-bye, however, he returned again; he hovered round her, and at last was fortunate enough to secure her arm and to put her into her

coupé. On going to it he was rendered exquisitely happy by Illyrine's reproaching him for the life he was leading, and the companions with whom he associated.

'Do you really care?' asked Averanche.

'Why should I speak to you, otherwise?'

These last words, so different from her habitual and coquettish sprightliness, spoken mournfully, made his heart leap within him for delight.

Good fortune, like bad, never comes singly. In coming up the great staircase again, he met two *Aides-de-camp* in brilliant uniform, who exclaimed to him :—

'Monsieur d'Averanche, where have you been? You are wanted in the ball-room.'

'Who wants me?' asked Averanche, with some surprise.

'The Princesse Camille Borghese.'

Wondering more and more, Averanche followed his two conductors in silence. When they had reached the head of the ball-room, they turned aside into the embrasure of a window, where, on a low divan, a little concealed from observation, the Princess Borghese rather reclined than sat. It was the lady of the beautiful eyes.

Averanche gazed upon her lustrous loveliness till he felt his brain reel within him. He had often heard of the Princess Pauline, but had never seen, not even in his dreams, such perfect, complete, consummate beauty. He remained rooted to the spot in a trance of admiration; he forgot her rank and dignity; beneath the influence of every spell which could contribute to the genius of form, he stood bewildered before her, absorbed in a passionate reverie, affected almost to tears, as many natures are by the great works of the Divine.

The Princess seemed a little embarrassed, but not displeased. She pointed to her little foot, and said, playfully :—

'Do you know, Monsieur, you have hurt my poor foot so much I cannot dance.' Her voice was very melodious, though she spoke feebly, as if all conversation was an effort to her in her invalid state.

She paused for a reply, but Averanche was still spell-bound ; the low murmur of her voice fell on his ear like an incantation ; he could not believe that such loveliness was real.

'Well, Monsieur!' this time there was something of Napoleon's sister in her voice, air, manner, command. 'What excuse have you? are you dumb?'

'I was short-sighted before, now I am blinded,—dazzled,' he added in a lower tone. His reconciliation with Illyrine had

given him confidence; he walked on air, he felt lighter, he breathed happiness, he spoke boldly, he was a new man. There is no man so agreeable to all the world as an accepted lover.

Mme. Borghese laughed slightly. 'Where did you learn all these pretty compliments, Monsieur?' she said after a pause.

'It would be impossible to pay your Imperial Highness a compliment,' answered Lionel, gravely and in earnest.

'Why not?' asked Pauline, whose vanity could not resist the question, although she of course anticipated the answer.

'Because your Imperial Highness is above all compliment.'

'No, no, Monsieur,' said the spoilt beauty; 'I shall not let you off so. I shall

insist upon it, you shall liken me to some one.'

Averanche was silent.

'What, none among all the celebrated beauties who were dressed like this?'

The Princesse Camille Borghese's eye glanced at her own classic costume with womanly vanity.

'None,' said Averanche.

'No one in Athens or in Rome?'

'No one,' repeated Lionel.

'Well, some one?' she asked, impatiently.

'Cleopatra.'

The slightest cloud darkened that radiant and faultless brow.

'Yes, Cleopatra,' continued Averanche, 'but for one reason only; because *One Man* alone was exempt from the power of her beauty, and he was the greatest of his age.'

'And that was ——'

'Napoleon.'

'Who, Monsieur?'

'I beg your Imperial Highness' ten thousand pardons—I meant Cæsar.'

CHAPTER VIII.

Il ne faut pas se faire un monstre du plus beau des malheurs, de la guerre.—PRINCE DE LIGNE.

THE red Sun is looking down upon the December snow which lies in broad white flakes upon the frost-bound and cheerless earth. Here and there are patches of fire which burn fitfully. Here and there are tents yet white in the wan gleams of morning. Here and there long rows of arms glisten like coiling rivers, and reflect a dim and uncertain light. There is a dense, dark, massive fog; but the Sun burns through it, like a globe of blood, 'as though a curse were in his broad bright eye.' On this side it flashes upon a mighty arma-

ment, united as one man, animated by one Idea, speaking one language, banded by one Will. On that side, at a little interval, it irradiates a vast encampment, mustered by various interests, arrayed in many garbs, parading a myriad contrasts; here the wildest of the wild, there the formal among the formal; here the sheepskin and the shaggy beard, there the pipe-clayed uniform and close-shaven face. Breathing many sentiments: here the heroism of Arminius in arms for freedom, the glorious Idea of Nationality; there the heroism of Genghis Khan, insatiate for conquest, the not less glorious Idea, that would absorb all nationality. Here are the guards of the Czar, like some green forest in palmy Midsummer; there the guards of the Cæsar, beautiful to look upon, Hungarian magnates, such as restored the shattered sceptre of Marie Thérèse.

Walloons who had been commanded by Loudon, Pandours who could remember Prince Eugene, mingling in strange fellowship with those whom Europe had never seen before, the wild men of the North, with Cossacks and Bashouks leaning low upon their rugged ponies with the old Scythian bow and arrow, as if to annihilate by their presence the distance between Alexander and Alexander, and recall the legacy of the world which the Great Macedonian bequeathed to the Sclavonian family.

That Sun, which shone on that December morning—it shines still. It will shine to all Eternity, long as History, long as the world —it was the Sun of Austerlitz.

And He of whom it shall be the memory, there are few to whom his image is not familiar, even as it appeared upon that morning—the high imperial forehead, yet

higher in its baldness; the eagle-eye which glanced so proudly at that sun; the small and delicate mouth compressed and resolved; the Cæsar-like figure moulded for command; the uniform of green and white, the grey riding-coat, the three-cornered hat, the map before him and its golden pins,—even the reverie in which he seems so entirely absorbed. About him are twenty heroes, Marshals whose names will never die. Generals whose actions won them their grade, soldiers with the love of glory high within their breasts. Silent, as if, according to the ancient legend, the grave had rendered up the Captain of a thousand ages,—silent with the expectation of what should fall from the lips of the greatest, silent with that silence which is more eloquent than speech, they stand around. The very horse is still which is held close by, its

milk-white hue contrasting strangely with the bare swart arm of its Mameluke attendant.

At a little distance from this central group were some battalions of the Guard. Here, though scarcely out of the Emperor's hearing, a running fire of rude commentaries, guesses, jests, was kept up among some veterans.

'*Dent de Fer*,' exclaimed a trooper, with long, uncouth, grisly hair, and enormous moustachios, to a colossal comrade whose dark keen eyes were fixed upon Napoleon, with an expression in which confidence and scrutiny were curiously blent; 'well, what do *you* say?'

'What was the proudest moment you ever saw him in, El Douba?' retorted *Dent de Fer* to Jacques Laurent, who had been nicknamed El Douba (the Arabic for hyena),

because in Egypt, a country of shaven heads, he had, with his wild, matted, tangled locks hanging round him, his ferocious appearance, and his piercing scream in the battle, given no unapt type of that animal.

'I will tell you,' after a pause, said Laurent; 'do you remember when Kleber almost lifted him off the ground in his embrace, and said to him after the battle of the Pyramids, "General, you are great as the world!" That was a glorious moment.'

'I will tell you a more glorious one to my mind, El Douba,' said a very handsome and much younger soldier, with teeth like pearls, glittering earrings, and an air of elaborate effeminacy, which, with a deep sabre gash on his forehead, and down his cheek, he could afford to assume; 'it was after Marengo, where I saw him ride up to a carriage, in which there was the most beautiful

of women, and he put his hand into the carriage, and she kissed it again and again.'

'Pshaw—Muscadin!—that was only a singing-woman,' said El Douba.

'I don't care what she was. I am thinking of her eyes. Oh, I should like to have been the Emperor then!'

'Well,' said a Breton trooper close by, with a wooden leg, and that savage innocence of air which characterises the men of his province, for whom his daring feats had earned him the sobriquet of 'Brave Gars,'—'Well, I know what my curé told me.'

'Ha, ha, ha,' the whole group of soldiers laughed long and heartily. 'How much now,' said Muscadin, 'did he tell you? that pretty Florence Chaumont's last child, when you were away in the last campaign, was a miracle, or that you must never kiss the vivandière, eh? le Brave Gars?'

'Do not scoff,' replied le Brave Gars, simply. 'No: you must know our curé's brother was with Cardinal Fesch, who is the little Corporal's uncle, and he has often heard the Cardinal say, that the Emperor himself declares the happiest moment of his life, was—what do you think?'

'When he pulled your moustache perhaps,' said Muscadin.

'No,' pursued the indomitable Gars, '"but when he received his first communion, his confirmation."'[1]

'Pshaw!' said El Douba.

'Why, you have all the faith of a centurion,' jested Muscadin.

'Truth can stand laughter, my comrades,' said the *naif* Chasseur, who never quarrelled; 'but for my own part, I own I think the

[1] The Duc de Cazes stated this as a fact publicly in a speech at a dinner given to him in the South.

happiest moment of his life must have been when the Holy Father came all the way from Rome to ——

'Do what?' asked Muscadin, mischievously.

'To put his crown on his head,' said le Brave Gars.

'But he put his crown on himself,' retorted Muscadin.

'Hush, I say, hush,' interrupted Dent de Fer, 'hush all of you—look at him *now*, and remember this is the anniversary of that day!'

The Emperor was at that moment, in truth, a grand object of contemplation. The sun's light was flashing full upon him, and he stood one moment as if transfigured. He waved his arm upwards as if to hail the omen; he said some words proudly, which the troopers were too far off to hear, but the

import of which they knew, 'Those armies shall be mine!'

And now that he is aroused from his self-concentration, he has summoned marshal after marshal to confer with him over his map—and one by one they are seen to ride away to their positions, each accompanied by young and brilliant *aides-de-camp*.

At this moment Lionel Averanche, who belonged to the same regiment as El Douba and Dent de Fer, the chasseurs of the Guard, had approached as near as they could to the group about the Emperor's person.

His object was to see Charles Denain, and give him some letters, which he had written the night before, in case he should fall in action.

He knew that Charles, who was in the Prince de Neuchâtel's staff, was less likely to be personally engaged than himself, and

he also knew that belonging to that arm, the cavalry of the Guard, which Napoleon used with such terrible effect, he at some time or other of the day would most probably be ordered into the hottest of the fight. But coming up to the spot where the little outer knot of soldiers had gathered, he could not help stopping, arrested by the grand historical scene before him.

Napoleon was engaged in earnest conversation, pointing every now and then to his map, with a tall ungainly officer, of strongly marked features, and an eye which, although loaded and heavy, was yet quick and shrewd, who although he listened with profound and almost religious deference, seemed occasionally to offer a suggestion.

Near Soult, for it was he, two other marshals, Bessières with his olive, thin, Italian face, and Lannes with dark, keen, savagely

handsome features, were looking on, intent and meditative. A little behind there were two generals, not unlike each other in figure. One was Rapp; the other, whose back was turned to them, was an object of some speculation to the soldiers. The Emperor had just summoned him as Soult galloped off. '*Crê nation*! it is Junot!' 'When could he have come?' 'Only last night.' 'Lucky *gars*! how burnt he is by the sun.' 'Ah, he has been in Spain.' 'I wonder what command he will have.' These and fifty similar questions and answers ran through the crowd, but they died away almost directly. Everyone seemed disposed to contemplate that unique spectacle in silence.

Averanche, a youth of thought, imagination, and education, was more curiously and deeply absorbed even than the rude Prætorians around. He did not share in their

superstitious confidence and blind adoration; but it was impossible to view Napoleon with other feelings than those with which man forgets his own littleness while looking on greatness.

The poet found amidst the fragments of the Roman Colosseum that his own griefs were as nothing, that they were annihilated, that they were *not* in the presence of that universal ruin. So it was with Averanche: while he gazed upon Napoleon, he forgot his letters, his anxiety to see Charles Denain, the self-diffidence, the agitation, the tremulous excitement, which even the bravest heart must feel in the hour which precedes a first battle; he forgot all things personal and immediate in the meditations challenged by that majestic presence. The individual was lost in the universal. Lionel thought not of himself, but of mankind. He was

in the presence of Napoleon, its crown and consummation.

The idea of universal monarchy—the dream of Charles the Fifth, the scheme of Philip the Second—that idea, which the Jesuits never have abandoned and never will abandon, it was there before his eyes, realized, incarnate. There he was, the nearest approximation the world has ever known unto Omnipotence. That diminutive frame, and that flashing eye, they had but to move, and the destinies of a hemisphere were changed. He had but to will, and millions willed as he did. He had but to speak, and monarchs trembled; and their people wept, some for terror, and more for hope. Athwart a world grown old, he was passing like the genius of life. There, as he stood at Austerlitz, in a land of decrepid conventions and formulary tyrannies, he symbolized a

revelation which was to supersede the old dispensations. He was the representative of new hopes, new feelings, new ideas, new instincts, which, various and conflicting in themselves, all centred and harmonized in him.

The young Republican in the far woods of the New World, the overtaxed artisan in the busy home of English industry, the German enthusiast of the Secret Society, the Caliph of the throne of Islam, the Pope who crowned him, and who prayed that he might prove a second Charlemagne to the Church, such were among the strange interests set in motion by this man of miracles. Who before ever centered in himself so many requirements, so many beliefs, so many hopes? Who was ever before so pre-eminent among all

'—the men divine
Who rose like shadows, between man and God,
Till that eclipse, still hanging o'er high Heaven,
Was worshipped by the world, o'er which they strode?'

Such thoughts as these were passing through Averanche's mind, when he was interrupted by Denain's voice.

'What dream are you in, Lionel? I have been looking at you for at least three minutes, from Berthier's side there, and you have been agaze all the while, like Endymion for the moon. Rouse yourself, *mon cher*, you will have some sharp work to-day; Bessières never spares the Guard.'

'Ah, it is about that I wanted to speak to you, Charles.'

They rode a little on one side, and Averanche drew two letters from his breast.

'In case, Charles, I fall to day, I wish you to take charge of these for me.'

'My dear fellow, that is so like you men

of imagination; you die ten times as often as anybody else.'

'Do not banter me now, Charles, we may perhaps never meet again. And I have loved you dearly, very dearly, more so, perhaps, than you will believe. This letter is for your father. I have thanked him in it for all his goodness to a poor orphan, who has, I hope, in spite of some few angry passages, never behaved ungratefully, nor with a want of affection towards him. Tell him, dear Charles, should I die, that I remembered him and spoke of him with tears. The other letter,' said Averanche, hesitating, and he gave it without adding a word.

Denain glanced at the envelope.

'Mlle. Illyrine de la Val. Good heavens, Leo, how can you be such an ass? Why, it is to the mistress of the English millionaire, Lord Latimer!'

A thousand recollections, a thousand probabilities, a thousand certainties flashed across Averanche's mind. He felt as a man stunned by a blow, and snatching the letter impatiently from Denain, he tore it into shreds, pressed Charles's hand with a rapid and silent emotion, and galloped back to his post.

The battle had already begun. The sharp rattle of the musketry sounded crisply in the frosty air. The long and sinuous columns, seen at a distance, looked like huge snakes gliding from brake and covert in the early morning. The Russian left is taking up its position. Four and twenty battalions in that green uniform, advancing silently in column; then a column of eighteen serried battalions; a third column of the same number; the Kolowrath's Austrian troops, with twelve more Russian

battalions, making in all eighty-seven battalions. It was a glorious and animating sight to see these cohorts so massive and compact; but the gleaming helmets and glancing sabres of Lichtenstein's magnificent cavalry, which supported them on each flank, still more vividly arrested the eyes. And now the advanced guard of the Russians is seen led by the impetuous Bagration, the hero of a hundred battles, the hero who was so ill rewarded. Ever the foremost in battle, he is already engaged with the French right, which he has thrown into some confusion. Davoust flies to the rescue, Davoust who so disliked Bonaparte, but who is grateful for his Marshal's *bâton* to Napoleon. The eagle eye is upon him; order is restored; the steady firing, gun for gun, volley for volley, tells that the fight is equally sustained upon the right. Now

opposing regiments mingle and are confounded. Neither give way. Napoleon's immediate anxiety is at an end, he has time to reconnoitre the formation of the whole allied army in columns. A flash of divination irradiates his face—it is the first glimpse of approaching victory. A great part of the enemy's line is unmistakably formed of raw material; they march without precision; there is here and there an ominous gap in that multitudinous array.

Averanche, who was posted with his regiment a little on Napoleon's right, again felt all the fascination of the great man's presence. He found refuge from his agonies in the sanctuary of that sacred contemplation. He forgot his own petty stakes in his interest in the gamester who was playing for the world. He watched the Emperor with a scrutiny so intense that

it would fain have entered with magnetic volition into his feelings. He has beckoned to Berthier. In another moment Charles Denain has received an order, and plunging his spurs in his horse's sides gallops away. He returns, and Soult is with him.

'How soon, Marshal, could you carry that village?'

Napoleon pointed to a hamlet environed by the allied lines.

'Pratzen, Sire?'

Napoleon nodded. The great strategist pauses. After an interval he adds:—

'Five and twenty minutes, Sire.'

'Take it.'

The magical words have gone forth. With the divisions, St. Hilaire, and Vandamme (Vandamme who even then dreamed of a crown), he has flung himself upon the enemy. Pratzen is his own within less than

the stipulated time. The Emperor's plan is accomplished, the enemies' communications are intercepted, their line is pierced. But the Russian infantry is not discouraged; these are not the troops of Mack, this is not the day of Ulm. They move, they advance, they regain Pratzen.

'Murat, Murat, Murat!' Like a Paladin of old he comes, with the glorious war cry and the dancing plume.

> Where the broken line enlarging,
> Fought or fled along the plain—
> There, be sure, was Murat charging.

Again, and again, and yet again he comes. It is in vain. They stand like a rock—that terrible infantry. Lannes is ordered to the support—the Ajax of the camp—with heart as dauntless, words as rude, and spirit as susceptible. And now the whole line is engaged: two hundred

pieces of cannon are roaring, two hundred thousand men are struggling with death. There has been no battle like to this; not Pharsalia, not Philippi, not Actium. Three emperors are in the field. On neither side does the balance yet incline. But now, Soult, who has been strengthened by the charges of Murat and Lannes, makes a desperate effort. Pratzen is his once more; he drives the enemy still farther; the village of Austerlitz is wrested from the Russians. Kutusoff sees his line broken; the peril is immediate, his communications are destroyed, but the day may still be retrieved. The Russian Guard, those picked troops of gigantic stature, of a courage almost savage, with the indomitable temper of that Tartar race which has swept victorious through deserts even to the eastern frontiers of China and Corea; these are now for the first time

to confront Europeans. And by their side, the Guard of Nobles, with a Grand Duke at their head, and the flower of the old Muscovite chivalry, sons of those Boyars who struck so bravely at Pultowa: these, too, are to charge.

With fierce 'hurrahs,' with a wild Asiatic prayer for their father Alexander, with loud calls upon their God whose regent he is,

'With their heads all drooping low, with their spears set in a row,
Like a whirlwind on the woods, like a deluge on the dykes,'

they fling themselves upon the French. The shock is terrific, and bears down all before it.

A whole regiment, the first of the line, is sabred where it stands by these gigantic sons of the Steppes. They must be the men of Anak the Scripture speaks of, with their

colossal stature and terrible deeds. 'Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah, hurrah!' their triumphant yells ring aloud above the blast of the clarions, and above the roar of the artillery. The Russian line is restored, the communications are preserved, and still they sweep on, this resistless cavalry, advancing with insulting cries, piercing into the very heart of their enemy.

But Napoleon's eye is upon them, the colour flushes in his cheek, the thunder rises in his voice.

'Bessières, charge with the Guard!'

The ground trembled as with an earthquake beneath the tramp of thousands of horsemen. Battalion after battalion, regiment after regiment, brigade after brigade. Lionel felt for the first time, as he galloped at full speed, 'the rapture of the strife.' Before his eyes was a glorious panorama of

waving plumes and flashing steel, in his ear the battle-cry of the bravest soldiers in Napoleon's army. His feelings, too, predisposed him to recklessness; he shouted with the shouts of the veterans. A bullet struck his helmet and bore it from his head. He flung up his arm gaily, and said, 'I shall see the barbarians all the better.'

'Now, then, is your time,' said *Dent de Fer*, as the Chasseurs of the Guard encountered in full charge a Russian regiment of Cuirassiers. It was at once a *mêlée* and a duel. The event of the day depended upon the issues of the combat between the French and Russian Guards. Each man knew it and felt it, with faith in himself, his standard, his cause, and his commander. Their eyes glanced at each other from beneath their glittering casques, with a glorious jealousy and an heroic hate.

The bullets hurtled through the air, the swords crossed, the clarions sounded. Chasseur and cuirassier, cuirassier and lancer, fought hand to hand and horse to horse. It was a whirlpool of eddying conflicts, which swayed and swept around; a whirlwind tossing the sand columns of the desert into each other; a series of tournaments, each with its own heroic achievements and chivalric incidents.

Lionel could scarcely breathe in his excitement: he knew that the French Guards' charge must have already lasted some time, yet the result seemed still doubtful and confused. On a sudden the wild scream of El Douba rang upon his ear. 'A barbarian is bearing off an Eagle!' It was so. A general officer of gigantic form was brandishing high the *guidon* of the regiment. Lionel, boy as he was, dashed up to him;

his hand was on the staff, El Douba's lance, too, was within a yard of the spoiler, when the Grand Duke Constantine, for it was he, with the shout of a savage, with the address of a gladiator, turned aside El Douba's spear, and clove him to the earth as he careered past him.

'Boy,' he roared, 'take that,' and with the hilt of his sword he struck Averanche, whose left hand was on the *guidon*, on his unprotected head.

Lionel fell senseless, his last thought one of intolerable anguish to see the eagle borne away.

Who has not seen that glorious charge as depicted by Gérard, when Rapp, with his sword snapt in twain, his head bare, his forehead bleeding, but his eye kindling with triumph, rides up to tell Napoleon its result? At his feet are Refruin, the colonel of the

Muscovite Guard of Nobles, and other prisoners of mark. And Napoleon—his glance is radiant, his mien superb; but there is a shade which darkens his solemn and meditative brow, as if he already felt the responsibilities of victory.

Near him there were two youths in the full sunshine of happiness, whom a metaphysician would probably have turned aside to contemplate. They were perhaps nearer heaven in that hour than the hero himself, for it was the hour of a maiden triumph. And there they stood, with the legion of honour—which the Emperor himself had placed there—glowing on their breasts. And he had added words of praise, which a whole army would repeat.

Yet Charles Denain looked as superbly indifferent as Alcibiades, after the hazards and glories of Potidæa. Turning round to

Alexis Vauriensky, his companion in glory, he whispered, half laughing, 'Alick, *mon cher*, there was just one moment when I was infernally near running away!'

CHAPTER IX.

Je ne suis point venu mettre la paix mais l'épée.
MONTECUCULI.

'WHAT a delightful thing a victory must be, Duke!' lisped a fine lady to the Duke of Wellington.

'The most tragic thing in the world, Madam, except a defeat,' was the grave reply of the immortal truth-teller.

The scene in the French camp after Austerlitz was a terrible illustration of this remark. The piercing cold, the dead and trampled bodies, the black hordes of carrion-crows which were gathered in dark dense masses about the field, or which might be seen wheeling with hungry expectation in

the air, the low moans of the wounded, here and there a woman's shriek, the deep curse of a disabled trooper, the vast expanse of strong and glaring colours, the very picturesqueness of the scene, all this, as Napoleon said at Eylau,

'had more relief upon a ground of snow.'

And yet in the midst of these horrors, the great commander's eye was roving over the Boulevards, upon the eager crowds of Paris, the little knots of men around the trees, the deep low universal hum of expectation, the appearance of the *Moniteur*, the bulletin of victory, the long, loud exulting shout of rapture which succeeds to that suspense. Nor was the statesman idle. His imagination throws him back into times when heroes lived; and he speaks a language and projects achievements which might arouse them from their sleep. He ordains that a mighty

column shall arise, in commemoration of the day; he will employ in a national enterprise the industry of a people whose energies had too long been neglected; he will adorn, exalt, and glorify his Paris; and in after ages the traveller will say, 'These were the great works of the first Emperor in the Capital of the Western Empire.' Where be these words, this enterprise, these achievements? O generation of the false and feeble—O race of expediency and compromise—O dwarfs who have succeeded unto giants! But the words of Napoleon still exist; these they could not destroy. Are they not worthy of a great man, conscious of greatness, and believing in himself? Are they not august but simple, above, beyond, apart from all contemporary comparison?

'Soldiers, I am contented with you. You have decorated your eagles with an

eternal fame. An army of a hundred thousand men, commanded by the Emperors of Austria and Russia, has in less than four hours been cut to pieces and dispersed. Of those who escaped your sword, most have been drowned in the waters. Forty flags, the standard of the Imperial Guard of Russia, one hundred and twenty cannon, twenty generals, thirty thousand prisoners, are the result of this ever-memorable day. This infantry so vaunted, and in number so greatly your superior, has been unable to withstand your shock, and henceforward you have no rivals.

'Soldiers, when the French people put upon my head the Imperial Crown, I placed my trust in you, to maintain it for ever in that high and glorious lustre which alone could render it of price. Soldiers, I will soon lead you back into France. There you

will be the object of my tenderest solicitude, and it will be enough for you to say, "I was at the battle of Austerlitz," for me to answer, "Behold a brave man!"'

Such was the tone in which Napoleon addressed his troops after his first victory as Emperor. Nor did he ever forget how signal a spell he conjured with in its memory. Its anniversary in the Russian Campaign furnished him with the noblest trait even of his heroic eloquence. '*They and we* are we not the troops of Austerlitz.' There is nothing in Demosthenes so fine.

The Emperor has just finished the dictation of his proclamation. Berthier and Caulaincourt are in his tent. He is walking restlessly backwards and forwards.

'I wish I could communicate with Denain. I can do nothing in this affair without him'—he pointed to a heap of papers on a

small table by him. 'Stop, let me see—Berthier, has he not a ward in the Guard? I will send him off to Paris to-night.'

'Why not send his son, sire, he is on my staff?'

'No, no, we shall have need of all our soldiers in a week. One night at Vienna must repair all the ravages we made to-day. We owe Austria some lives.'

The quick diplomatist smiled at this adaptation of the great Condé's celebrated *mot*: but Berthier, a practical man, whose soul was above a jest, asked the Emperor, gravely,

'Shall I fetch this youth here?'

'Directly.'

It was not long before Averanche (who had only been stunned by the blow he had received) was in Napoleon's presence.

'Your name?'

'Lionel Averanche.'

Napoleon, as Madame Campan tells us, was singularly susceptible to sweet sounds and strangely fascinated by a melodious name. Averanche's voice was musical and soft; and it was, perhaps, this that at once prepossessed Napoleon in his favour.

'You have had a blow to-day?'

'Yes, Sire, in defence of an Eagle.'

'You are a brave boy; the Russians should not strike such children.'

'It was the Grand Duke Constantine himself, Sire,' said Averanche, rather proudly. Nobody, old or young, unless it be a woman, likes to be called a child.

Napoleon laughed.

'An imperial compliment; I must match it with another, the legion of honour will become you.'

Averanche's eye lighted with joy.

'And you shall go on Berthier's staff. And now for the greatest of all graces—what is that, think you?'

'To serve your Majesty.'

'No, *pardie*, but to see Paris. You must be off to-night. You will there see M. Denain, and you will tell him that I have told you so and so. Now for business. What I am going to say is very simple, but I will not write. Do you understand me?'

Averanche bowed low.

Napoleon then, with much precision and in a few words, entrusted Averanche with an outline of a financial scheme which was to counteract the operations of a party on the Bourse, headed by a minister whom Napoleon knew to be playing for the *baisse*, and therefore, in every way that the strongest motives might devise, counteracting his

plans. Strange it is, that the world has developed and improved into a golden age where avarice is the best incitement to imagination. The arrangements which Napoleon rapidly indicated, served to show the coming disgrace of M. Barbé-Morbois (his Finance minister), and were to end in the ruin of that gigantic financier, Ouvrard, whom he envied and hated, as Louis XIV. envied and hated Fouquet. He desired M. Denain to prepare a list of the recent engagements this millionaire had entertained with the Prince of the Peace and the House of Hope at Amsterdam, and to hold him personally responsible for the enormous sum of three millions and a half sterling.

'Now, Monsieur, there is trusted to you a secret which must be known only to three men, yourself, M. Denain, and

myself. Be discreet, and your fortune is made.'

Averanche could not forbear from kneeling and kissing the great man's hand.

'Your family is, I think, from Normandy, is it not, M. d'Averanche?'

Averanche assented, but his features betrayed all his astonishment, that Napoleon should be acquainted with his genealogy.

'Ah, I know more about you than you think,' and he played with Lionel's ear caressingly. 'Your father's last words were, "*Fais ton métier—je fais mon devoir.*" His son must never forget them.'

Napoleon spoke so kindly that Averanche's eyes filled with tears. It is the gift of a man of genius to move and to attach even at first interviews.

'Farewell, young sir; yours is a great name, and I will take care of it.'

'As old, Sire, as Charlemagne,' said Averanche, encouraged by the great man's evident prepossession and liking for him. Charlemagne was a name which Napoleon never heard without pleasure, nor at the same time without the interest which his own great feudal scheme engendered.

'Indeed—so old?'

'Yes, Sire,' continued Averanche, still more encouraged in his boyish confidence; 'but our house was founded under William the Conqueror.'

'You shared in the conquest of England?'

'Yes, Sire.'

'Well,' said Napoleon, laughingly, 'we will perhaps found it anew in the next conquest of England.'

Averanche bowed and took his leave. Nor were the few minutes which Napoleon had seemingly wasted in light converse with-

out a purpose on the part of that comprehensive thinker, one who was so great in vast enterprises because he never lost an opportunity in details. He never permitted an occasion to escape him of attaching to his person the old names and families of France. He had already gathered around him Montmorencys, Noailles, Montesquieus, and Talleyrands. In the Empress Josephine's household were to be found the names of Rohan, La Rochefoucauld, and Bouillé. While he thus rooted himself in the past, he felt more confident of the future.

Averanche, when he found himself outside the Emperor's tent, looked around for his horse, which he had tied to a tree close by. It had disappeared, which was only natural, considering that Lionel, in the intoxication of being summoned into Napoleon's presence, had given it in charge

to no one. Leaning, however, against the same tree, he distinguished the robust form of Le Brave Gars, who was smoking his tobacco out of a magnificent German meerschaum, late the property of one of Lichtenstein's hussars.

'Hallo there, you sir,' said Averanche, elated by his interview with majesty, and the prospect of his secret mission—'where is my horse?'

'God knows, my child,' replied the Brave with all the familiarity of a French soldier who recognises an officer but no *superior*.

'Damnation! but I left it there!'

'Very likely,' said the Gars, continuing to puff with unabated composure.

'Go and get me another,' said Averanche, impetuously; 'I must be at the Commissary-General's quarters directly. I have orders from the Emperor.'

'No doubt: but you must find me fourgon No. 17 first.'

'By heaven, sir, I will have you tried for disobedience. Will you or will you not move?'

'You must find me fourgon No. 17, first,' repeated Le Brave Gars, doggedly.

'Are you mad or drunk, or what?' said Averanche. 'Neither,' Le Gars answered, 'but I have lost a leg.'

'Good God! and you are out here, and in this weather?'

'Yes, but it was my wooden one, and I cannot replace it till I find fourgon No. 17.'

'Well, I will send you your leg. I am off to the Commissary-General's this instant. Only tell me how to get a horse.'

'Take that one there,' said Le Brave; and he pointed to a charger with splendid

housings, held by a servant in the superb green uniform of the grand Veneur's establishment.

'But it is the Prince of Neuchatel's.'

'Ay, ay, he has been promoted prince, so may you or I be to-morrow or the next day; but we are comrades for all that, and you have *His* orders to carry.'

CHAPTER X.

The boy thus when his sparrow's flown
The bird in silence eyes,
But soon as out of sight 'tis gone
Whines, whimpers, sobs and cries.

Beggar's Opera.

AFTER such over-excited and extreme feelings as the events that have been described produced in Lionel Averanche, there is commonly a reaction. The very consciousness of Napoleon's kindness, and therefore the chance of a successful and even a great career, now only provoked an almost intolerable sadness. What were politics and their vicissitudes to him whose soul was dark within him, from whom the light

which had so long played upon his secret thoughts was now withdrawn—to him who would never more look into those eyes whose lustre had so gently shone upon him. Flung thus into himself, for sadness is always selfish, he fell into a self-pitying and mournful reverie, which was only broken when the remarks of Charles Denain before the battle seemed again to sound in his ear. He writhed and almost moaned aloud beneath their influence. Illyrine! to whom he had offered up his most unworldly and unselfish homage, whom he had worshipped in that truest of all worships in his lonely hour; whose brilliant reminiscences had preserved and even allured him from so many base temptations; whose sacred image had at times been a reproach, and therefore been adorned with more self-disgust and greater self-devotion! These memories, all wrecked

and dead, and turned to ashes, were very bitter and hard to bear for so young and sensitive a spirit. Those to whom nature has awarded warm feelings, and who now look back to early days, in all the cynicism of spent and exhausted sense, will perhaps bethink themselves of young vows and former oaths not dissimilar to those now uttered by Lionel. For himself, he felt so abject, so lowered, so degraded, he was so much ashamed of an unworthy and yet inextricable love, that he pined, as it were, to quit himself and life and the world. When we are boys we are for ever playing the phantom game of 'Cæsar or nothing' with ourselves, and as few can become Cæsars, every generation is full of abortive heroes consecrated to the sad alternative of nothingness. But how earnest were they! how determined not to outlive the hour

which might frustrate! the day after which might ruin! how sincere in anguish, how true in their despair!

It must be remembered that Averanche was very young, and, as a great metaphysician has said, nothing seduces a young man so much as the idea of playing guardian angel and acting Providence to a beautiful woman. He was honest with himself, while he swore to disbelieve Charles Denain's story, and swore also to love Illyrine no more: and yet Charles's story was weighing heavy on his inmost soul, and he felt he never loved Illyrine more than when he made the vow to be only her good genius. Ah, it is a difficult thing to forget when we have loved, and Averanche indulged in wild fantastic reveries in which he blent his future fortune with Illyrine and ministered unknown to her sacred service, and unseen,

strewed upon her path the sunshine and the pleasantness of life. The strange combination made by his imagination with the scenes which he so vividly painted to himself out of feeling and despair soothed him and beguiled him for a time from the barren truth. All men know it. Even far older ones than Lionel still seek the cheatery of impossible illusions, fly to fancy as they might to opinion, and dream wild dreams of Elysian and extravagant vicissitude.

'Will you not alight, sir?' The voice of an importunate postmaster recalled Averanche to the world without. He stepped into the kitchen of the cabaret to which his host conducted him, and mechanically called for supper. The remains of a pasty and a Westphalia ham were soon before him, with capital rye bread and a flask of Rhenish. But Averanche was in no

mood to eat; he played with a morsel or so of food, but he drank with desperate avidity. He had just poured out the last glass the bottle contained, when he was made aware that another traveller was also supping in the kitchen.

'Let us drink to one another, fair youth.' There was something sneering, a latent contemptuousness in the stranger's voice, which displeased Averanche. He looked at him not without haughtiness, with the dignity of melancholy however rather than of aristocracy or station.

'We ought to drink together,' continued the stranger, drily.

'Why?' asked Averanche.

'Sympathy. Men drink either from pleasure or from care. You drink too fast for the first.'

While the stranger spoke, Averanche,

little disposed as he then was to observe or make remarks, was struck by the appearance of his companion. Prematurely white hair curled about his forehead; black, evil eyes glowed while he spoke, but were ever bent downwards; a shame-stricken stamp hung upon his haggard features, which were otherwise handsome, and a colossal stature, in its Herculean proportions and exquisite symmetry, recalled the fabulous appearance of Trenck of Spandau. All this Averanche noticed, but it did not interest him; so he bowed his head politely to the challenge, but did not speak.

'At your age grief comes from two things, love going outwards or love turning inwards. You have, I suppose, idealized a jilt, or quarrelled with your guardian, eh?'

The observation was searching. There

was also a genuine lightness in it which accorded with Lionel Averanche's sentiments.

'Your opinion of the world is seemingly not of the highest.'

'The world and I are enemies. We always think highly of those whom we dignify into foes and speak ill of them. Do you not know that, young sir?'

There was the same sardonic expression on the stranger's features which had before displeased Lionel; but he was sad at heart, and therefore indisposed to take affront, and he spoke rather to himself than to his companion when he answered,

'I have no foes: I was only this moment wishing I had no friends.'

'Already on the path which leads to this;' and the stranger indicated his matted and haggard mien, with a not ungraceful gesture.

'So young,' he pursued, as if he in his turn was speaking to himself, 'already wounded and already writhing. Drink, sir, drink, it will help your imagination,—and if it lead to the grave, the imagination leads to worse, it leads to this.' The stranger again pointed to himself.

Lionel Averanche was struck by the energy of his manner; he could not answer by a formula or a commonplace, so he remained silent, not without a sort of sympathy in his looks.

'Ah, young sir, you feel and you fancy—two steeds which gallop pretty fast to the great end. You are a poet too, you were murmuring verse words to yourself but now as you came in. Do you want a hero for your next poem?' The stranger's tone changed into a levity which was bitterer than ever.

'Take me—idealize the principle of

hate—hate of man, not the sick phantasy of the Roman Emperor who pined for one neck for mankind, but a misanthropy real, burning, ever present here, ever goading, which longs—yearns, as no saint ever longed or yearned—for the Day of Judgment. Do you know why?'

Averanche, who began to think he had fallen in with a madman, got up from his seat.

'To be avenged upon my race,' hissed rather than whispered the stranger in his ear.

Averanche's thoughts were of the serpent, so hellish was the expression of hate on his companion's face.

'Ah, there are your four horses, and here is my good hack worth them all four.' The stranger's voice was again changed into his

familiar and every-day tone. 'Good-bye, young sir.'

Ten minutes afterwards the stranger galloped past, and his wild words and unearthly appearance were soon banished from Averanche's thoughts. So true is it that the individual principle is always selfish, in small things as in great. Lionel had lost a creation of his own, and, true to humanity, was absorbed, Narcissus-like, in his shallow sorrow.

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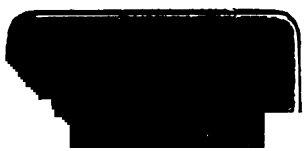
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